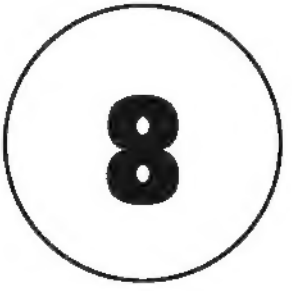
8
SUZUKA
KOUJI SEO

SUZUKA



Kouji Seo

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY
David Ury

LETTERED BY
North Market Street Graphics

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Suzuka 8

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A Note from the Author

ALL OF MY TOMATOES HAVE DIED.
I'LL HAVE TO POSTPONE MY BIG TOMATO PARTY UNTIL NEXT YEAR...

Honorifics Explained

Throughout the Del Rey Manga books, you will find Japanese honorifics left intact in the translations. For those not familiar with how the Japanese use honorifics and, more important, how they differ from American honorifics, we present this brief overview.

Politeness has always been a critical facet of Japanese culture. Ever since the feudal era, when Japan was a highly stratified society, use of honorifics—which can be defined as polite speech that indicates relationship or status—has played an essential role in the Japanese language. When addressing someone in Japanese, an honorific usually takes the form of a suffix attached to one's name (example: "Asuna-san"), is used as a title at the end of one's name, or appears in place of the name itself (example: "Negi-sensei," or simply "Sensei!").

Honorifics can be expressions of respect or endearment. In the context of manga and anime, honorifics give insight into the nature of the relationship between characters. Many English translations leave out these important honorifics and therefore distort the feel of the original Japanese. Because Japanese honorifics contain nuances that English honorifics lack, it is our policy at Del Rey not to translate them. Here, instead, is a guide to some of the honorifics you may encounter in Del Rey Manga.

-san: This is the most common honorific and is equivalent to Mr., Miss, Ms., or Mrs. It is the all-purpose honorific and can be used in any situation where politeness is required.

-sama: This is one level higher than "-san" and is used to confer great respect.

-dono: This comes from the word "tono," which means "lord." It is an even higher level than "-sama" and confers utmost respect.

-kun: This suffix is used at the end of boys' names to express familiarity or endearment. It is also sometimes used by men among friends, or when addressing someone younger or of a lower station.

-chan: This is used to express endearment, mostly toward girls. It is also used for little boys, pets, and even among lovers. It gives a sense of childish cuteness.

Bozu: This is an informal way to refer to a boy, similar to the English terms "kid" and "squirt."

Sempai/ Senpai: This title suggests that the addressee is one's senior in a group or organization. It is most often used in a school setting, where underclassmen refer to their upperclassmen as "sempai." It can also be used in the workplace, such as when a newer employee addresses an employee who has seniority in the company.

Kohai: This is the opposite of "sempai" and is used toward underclassmen in school or newcomers in the workplace. It connotes that the addressee is of a lower station

Sensei: Literally meaning "one who has come before," this title is used for teachers, doctors, or masters of any profession or art.

[blank]: This is usually forgotten in these lists, but it is perhaps the most significant difference between Japanese and English. The lack of honorific means that the speaker has permission to address the person in a very intimate way. Usually, only family, spouses, or very close friends have this kind of permission. Known as *yobisute*, it can be gratifying when someone who has earned the intimacy starts to call one by one's name without an honorific. But when that intimacy hasn't been earned, it can be very insulting.

SUZUKA

8

Kouji Seo

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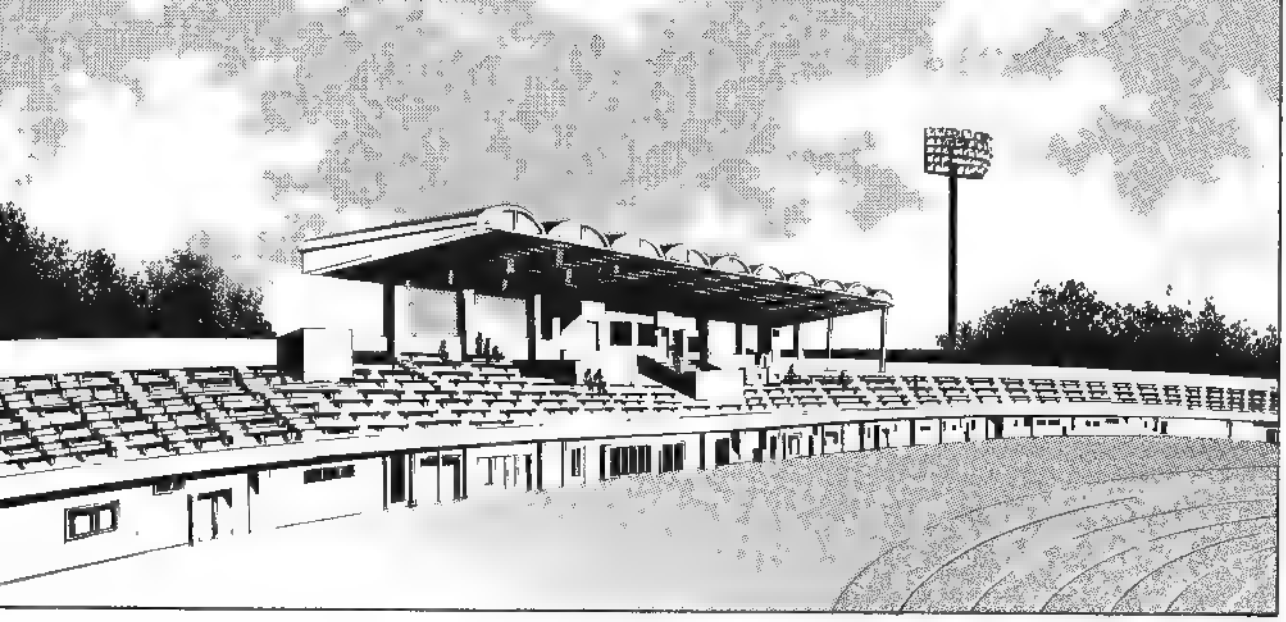
ALL RUNNERS, PLEASE COME TO THE TRACK IMMEDIATELY.
ATTENTION, PLEASE. WE WILL BE STARTING THE MEN'S 100 METER DASH PRELIMINARY SHORTLY.
STOMP
JUST WATCH.
I'M GONNA BE THE NUMBER ONE RUNNER IN ALL OF JAPAN!!

#60 Accomplishment



STEP
カツン
カツン
STEP
36

AKIT-
SUKI!!

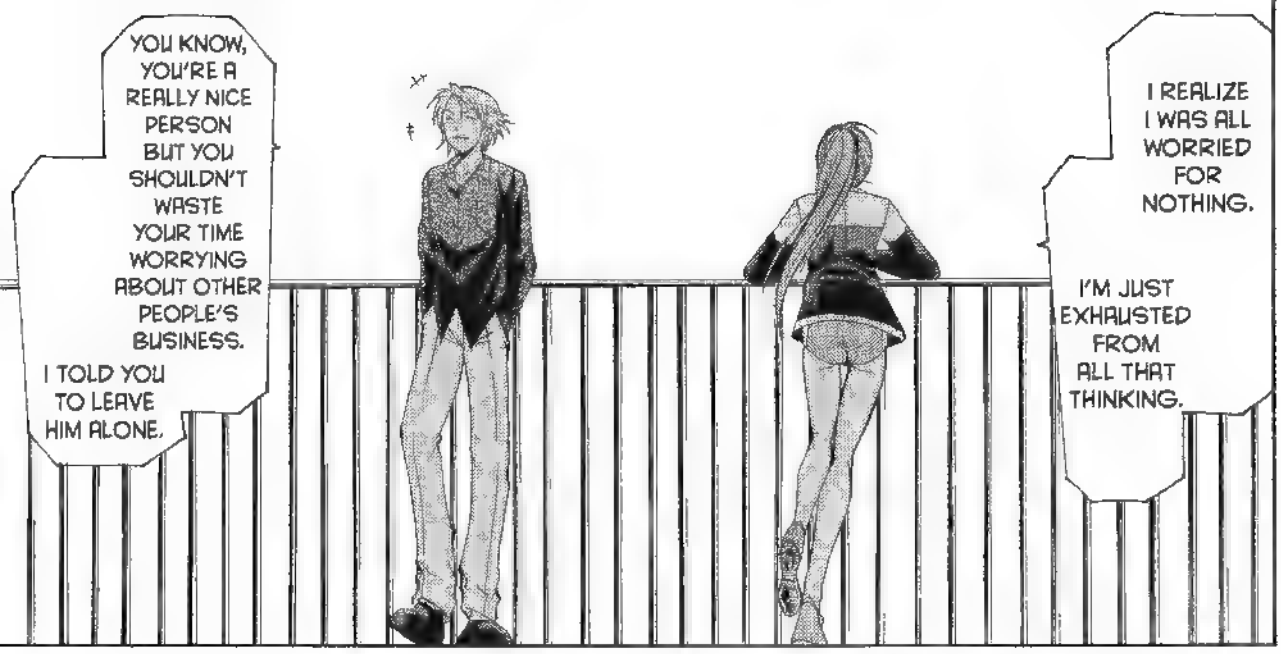
ALL
RIGHT...
IT'S
TIME
TO DO
THIS.

WHERE HAVE
YOU BEEN?
THAT WAS
THE FINAL
CALL!!
DON'T
WORRY. I
HEARD IT.
36

ARE YOU WEARING YOUR UNIFORM!? YOU DIDN'T FORGET YOUR TRACK SHOES DID YOU?
BYOON
WAHH! NO, I'VE GOT EVERY-THING.
COME ON, KINUGASA-SENPAI, HE'S NOT A LITTLE KID.
HE IS TOO A LITTLE KID. DON'T YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED LAST RACE?
YANK
H-HEY...
AKIT-SUKI-KUN, GOOD LUCK...
YOU'RE OUR TEAM'S NEW ACE IN THE HOLE. IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU STARTED ACTING LIKE IT.
WH-WHAT? NOBODY TOLD ME THAT.
SAKURA!! I'M GONNA TAKE FIRST PLACE AGAIN IN THE 200-METER RACE!!
O-OKAY... GOOD LUCK.
.....
ALL RIGHT. NOW SHOW 'EM WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF.
SLAP
OUCH!!
AH, HEY, AKIT-SUKI.

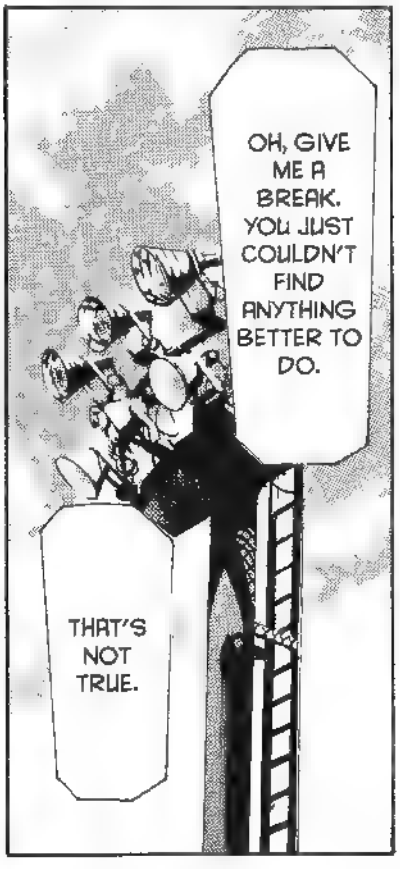
I'M SURE YOU'RE AWARE OF THIS, BUT...
ONLY SEVEN OR EIGHT PEOPLE RUNNING IN THIS RACE WILL BREAK TWELVE SECONDS, SO...
I KNOW.
O-OKAY. NEVER MIND THEN...
CLOPPA
CLOPPA
136
HEY, WILL YOU PLEASE STOP ACTING LIKE SUCH A WEIRDO? YOU'RE TOTALLY EMBARRASSING ME.
I'M JUST TRYING TO GET MYSELF PUMPED UP, THAT'S ALL.
YEAH?
WELL, DON'T OVERDO IT.
I CAN'T HOLD BACK THIS TIME.

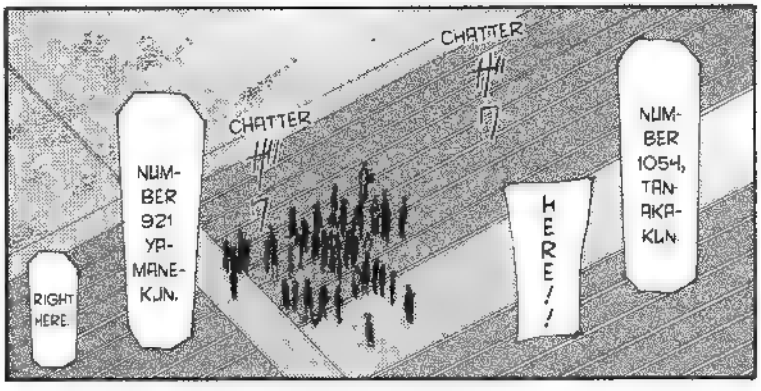
I HAVE TO WIN EVERY RACE!!
125
CLOPPA
CLOPPA
SIGH...
THIS IS RIDICU-LOUS...
IT'S AKIT-SUKI AND SU-ZUKA!
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK REALLY IR-R TATED.
MAYBE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN GETTING ENOUGH CALCIUM.
WANT THIS?
THEY FINALLY MADE UP...
WHAT? WELL ISN'T THAT A GOOD THING?
ARE YOU JEAL-OUS OR SOME-THING?
OF COURSE NOT!!
I WAS REALLY WORRIED THAT SUZUKA WAS GONNA HATE AKITSUKI FOREVER. I'D BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT NONSTOP.
CRUNCH
AND NOW...


YOU KNOW, YOU'RE A REALLY NICE PERSON BUT YOU SHOULDN'T WASTE YOUR TIME WORRYING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS.
I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE HIM ALONE.
I REALIZE I WAS ALL WORRIED FOR NOTHING.
I'M JUST EXHAUSTED FROM ALL THAT THINKING.

WHAT? I'M HERE TO SHOW MY SUPPORT FOR MY GOOD FRIEND, YAMATO.
SHUT UP!
I MEAN, WHAT ARE YOU EVEN DOING HERE!?

YOU HAVE WAY TOO MUCH TIME ON YOUR HANDS...
IT'S REALLY FUN WATCHING YAMATO.
HE ALWAYS GETS INTO TROUBLE.

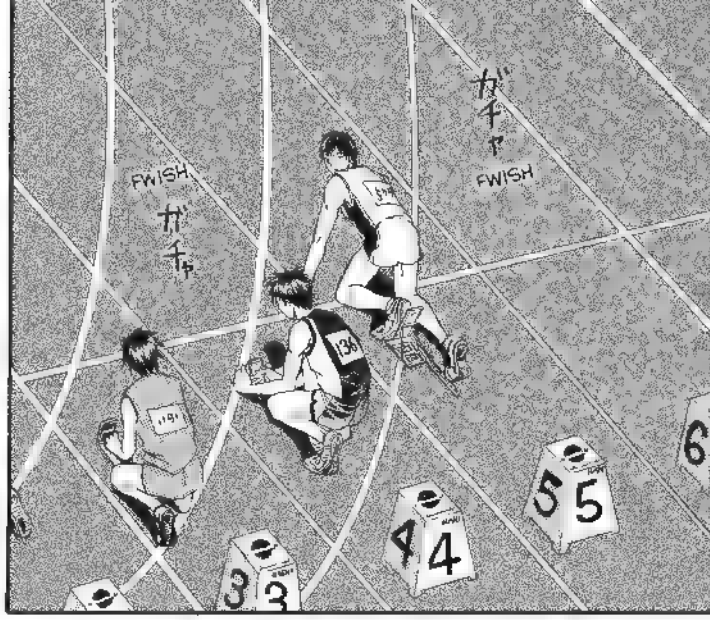

OH, GIVE ME A BREAK. YOU JUST COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING BETTER TO DO.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.


CHATTER
CHATTER
NUMBER 921 YAMANEKJN.
RIGHT HERE.
HERE!!
NUMBER 1054, TANAKAKJN.

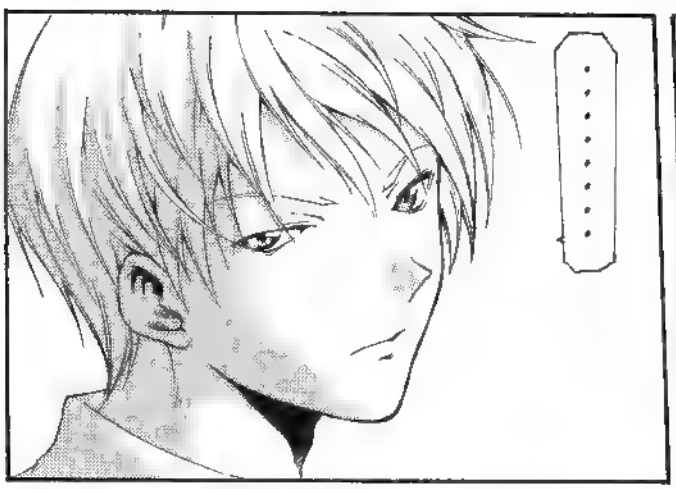
NUMBER 910, ARIMA-KUN.
HERE!!
910
EMERSON ARIMA...
THAT'S RIGHT... I FORGOT HE'S IN MY DISTRICT.
13

WILL YOU JUST GET LOST? YOU'RE STARTING TO ANNOY ME.
...RAN THE 100 METER DASH IN 10.46 SECONDS.
EMERSON ARIMA FROM TOUTO PREP...
DO YOU KNOW THAT GUY, ARIMA-SENPAI?
I'LL NEVER BE NUMBER ONE IN JAPAN UNLESS I BEAT HIM...
.....
NOPE.
CAN I REALLY DO IT...?
ON YOUR MARKS...

TRY NOT TO LOSE THIS TIME!
GOOD LUCK.
GO, AKI-TSU-KI!!


FWISH
FWISH
3
4
5

SHUT UP! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.
KINU-GASA-SENPAI...
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS HIDING?


.....

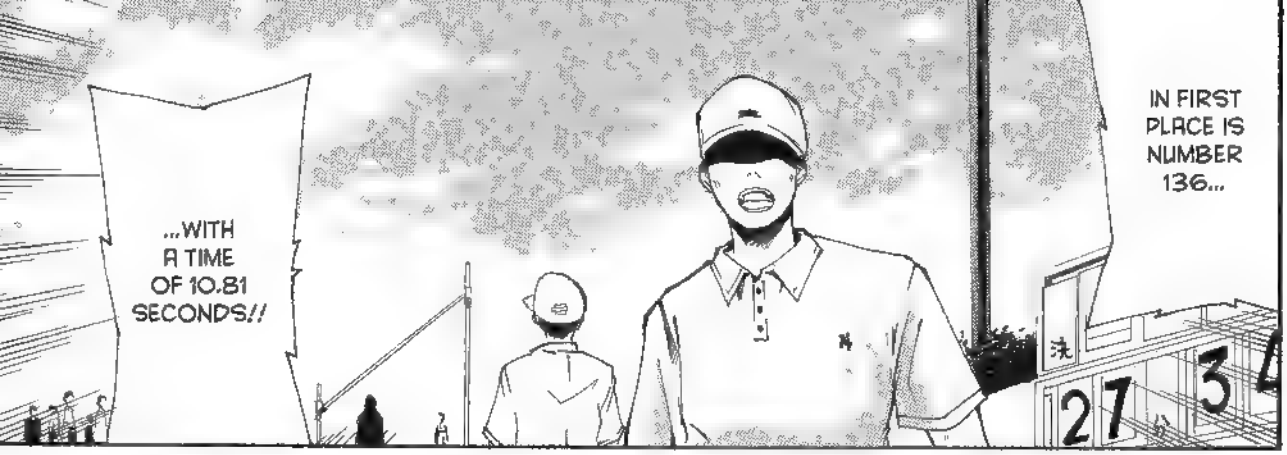
LET'S SEE, WHAT HAPPENS THIS TIME.
HE'S PROB-ABLY NER-VOUS...
CHECK HIM OUT! HE LOOKS ALL SE-RIOUS.

GET SET!

WHAT IF I LOSE? WHAT AM I GONNA DO?
CLACKA
CLACKA
I DIDN'T MISS A SINGLE PRACTICE FOR TWO WHOLE MONTHS, BUT STILL...
SHE'LL PROBABLY JUST TURN ME DOWN AGAIN.
EVEN IF I TELL HER HOW I FEEL...
FWCK
GO!
I'M NOT EVEN GONNA THINK ABOUT IT ANYMORE.
BUT I STILL LIKE ASAHINA!

ALL I CAN DO NOW IS GIVE IT MY BEST SHOT!
BANG
136

GOOD... HE'S OFF TO A BETTER START THAN LAST TIME.
OF COURSE HE IS! I MADE H M PRAC- TICE HIS TAKEOFF ABOUT A THOUSAND TIMES.
WOOO!
OH MY GOD, THAT GUY'S FAST!
HMMPH.
THAT'S IT, AKITSUKI!!
YOUR FORM IS LOOKING GOOD!!


IN FIRST PLACE IS NUMBER 136...
...WITH A TIME OF 10.81 SECONDS!!

YES!!

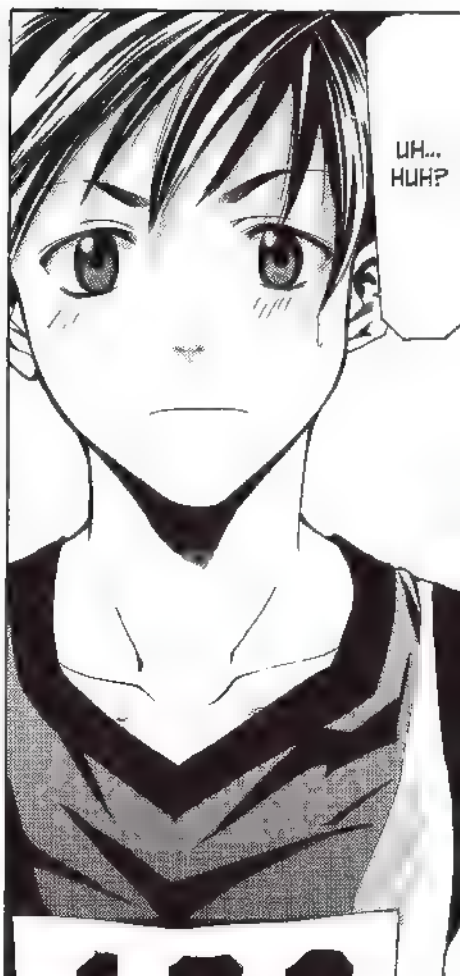
10.81... SEC- ONDS...

WHOA, HE MAN- AGED NOT TO SCREW THINGS UP THIS TIME.
125

I DID IT!!
I CAME IN FIRST! FIRST PLACE!!
136
FWOOSH
SENPA-I!!
FWOOSH

.....
UH-HUH... YEAH...
DID YOU SEE ME!?
10.81 SECONDS, MY BEST TIME EVER!!
136

SASAK!-SENPA...
TAP
YEAH, THAT WAS GOOD. JUST MAKE SURE YOU DO THAT WELL IN THE RELAY, TOO.
136
131


UH... HUH?

WHAT'S GOING ON? I'M STILL NOT FAST ENOUGH FOR THEM...?
.....?

I TOLD YOU NOT TO OVERDO IT, DIDN'T I?
WHAT?
136
EVERYONE KNOWS YOU'RE FAST.
DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT YOU CAN KEEP UP THAT PACE THROUGH BOTH THE SEMIFINALS AND THE RELAY?
125
YOU'VE GOT TO START THINKING ABOUT PACE.
WHOA, WHOA...IT'S ALL RIGHT. YOU WERE REALLY FAST, AKITSUKI! YOU DID GOOD!
FLUP
WELL...
DIDN'T MIYAMOTO SENPAI TELL YOU THAT ONLY SEVEN OR EIGHT RUNNERS WOULD BREAK TWELVE SECONDS IN THIS RACE?
TWENTY-FOUR PEOPLE WILL MAKE IT TO THE SEMIFI-NALS.
WHICH MEANS EVEN IF YOU KEEP YOUR TIME DOWN BETWEEN 11.30 SECONDS AND 12.00 SECONDS, YOU'LL STILL QUALIFY.

WHY SHOULD I CARE!!
YOU ARE SUCH A DORK.
YOU SHOULD AT LEAST KNOW HOW THE TOURNAMENT WORKS.
SLUMP
I... TRIED REALLY HARD...
136
10.81 SECONDS...
HMMM.
WELL, ONE THING'S FOR SURE...
HE'S FASTER THAN TSUDA WAS IN HIS PRIME.

SUZUKA

#61 Earnestness

WHOOSH!
910
117
IN FIRST PLACE IS NUMBER 910 WITH A TIME OF 11.01 SECONDS!!

YEAH, YOU COULD TELL HE WAS TOTALLY HOLDING BACK FOR THE LAST HALF OF THE RACE, BUT HE STILL CAME IN UNDER TWELVE SECONDS.
I KNEW ARIMA WOULD WIN. HE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO TRY.

.....
HE'S DEFINITELY IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN.
HE'LL WIN THE SEMIFINALS NO PROBLEM.

...AND MY PERSONAL BEST IS THE 10.81 SECONDS I JUST RAN.
HIS RECORD FOR THE 100-METER DASH IS 10.46 SECONDS
117
...BUT WE'LL DEFINITELY BE GOING UP AGAINST EACH OTHER IN THE FINALS.
WE WERE IN A DIFFERENT HEAT FOR THIS RACE...
THAT'S A GAP OF .35 SEC-ONDS...
AH, AKIT-SUKI-KUN...
OH... UH... I'M ALL RIGHT. I JUST HAD SOME-THING TO DRINK.
UM... ARE YOU THIRSTY?
HE WON'T BE EASY TO BEAT.

WHAT AM I TALKING ABOUT...
OH, YEAH...
THAT'S RIGHT, I SAW YOU DRINK-ING SOME-THING...

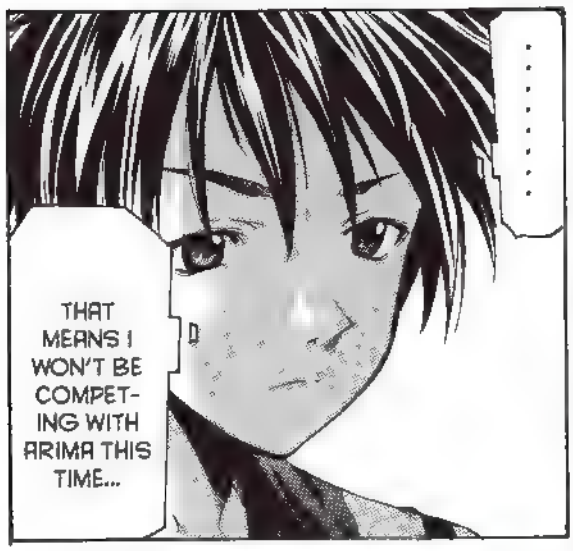
UH...IS SOME-THING THE MATTER!?

N-NO...IT'S NOTH-ING.
WELL, GOOD LUCK!
YEAH, THANKS.

AKITSUKI-KUN'S BEEN REALLY DISTANT...
...THESE LAST FEW WEEKS.
WE USED TO BE SO CLOSE, AND NOW...
FOR SOME REA-SON...

YEP.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO RUN THE 100-METER DASH IN THE FINALS, BECAUSE IT'S A "TIMED" RACE.
HUH? REALLY!?

THE TOP EIGHT RUNNERS IN THE SEMIFINALS WILL AUTOMATICALLY ADVANCE TO THE TOKYO FINALS.
SO, THEY'LL JUST GO BY YOUR TIME FROM THE SEMIFINALS.
IN OTHER WORDS...
THE SEMIFINAL RACE IS PRETTY MUCH THE SAME THING AS THE FINALS.
136


.....
THAT MEANS I WON'T BE COMPETING WITH ARIMA THIS TIME...

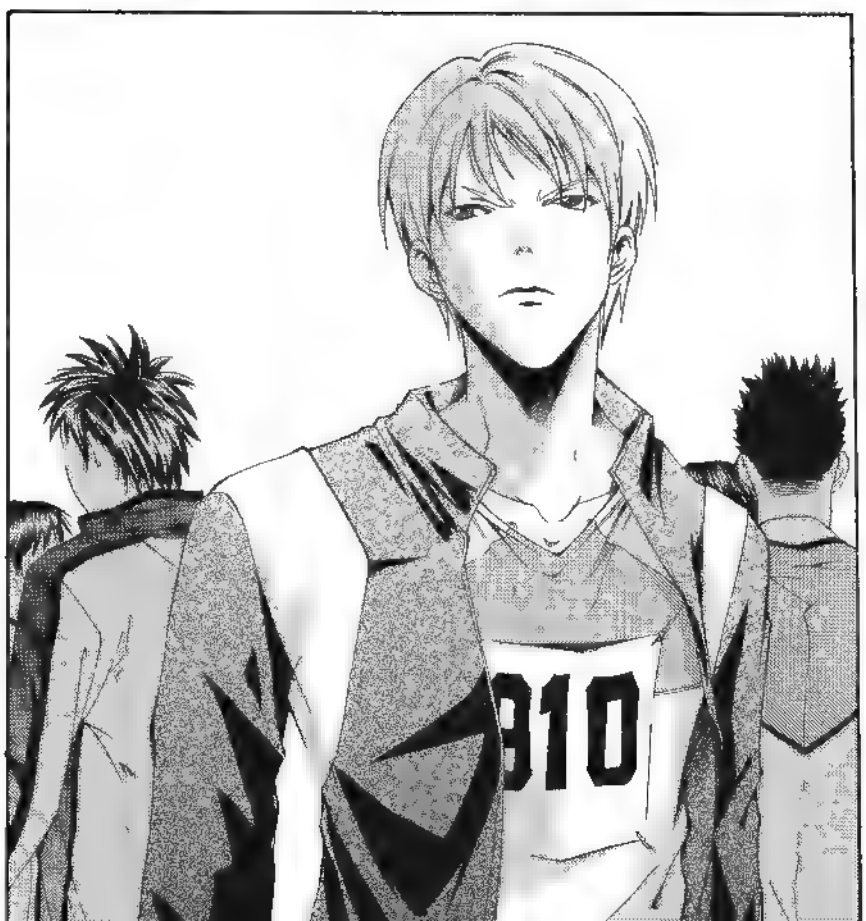
YOU PROBABLY THOUGHT THAT YOU'D BE RUNNING IN THE FINALS, TOO, RIGHT?
WE-L... YEAH...
13

THIS IS THE FINAL CALL FOR THE MEN'S 100 METER DASH SEMIFINAL!!
ALL RUNNERS PLEASE COME TO THE STARTING LINE IMMEDIATELY.
LET'S GO, AKITSUKI. DON'T LOSE FOCUS.
WHAT...?
136
OH, ARE YOU IN THIS RACE, TOO, SASAKI-SENPAI?
WHAT!? DIDN'T YOU SEE ME RUN IN THE PRE-LIMINAR-IES AFTER YOUR RACE!?
YOU'D BETTER START PAYING ATTENTION TO WHAT YOUR SENPAIS ARE DOING, MAN.
WAHH! HEY, WATCH OUT! YOU'VE GOT YOUR SPIKES ON.
SASAKI IS BEING A PAIN IN THE ASS AGAIN.
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THAT GUY.
WELL, HE'S JUST A PERFEC-TIONIST, THAT'S ALL...
HE CAN'T STAND SEE-ING PEOPLE GO INTO A RACE WITH A HALF-ASSED ATTITUDE.

I THINK HE'S JUST FRUSTRATED BECAUSE HE CAN'T FIGURE OUT...
...HOW AKITSUKI REALLY FEELS ABOUT TRACK..

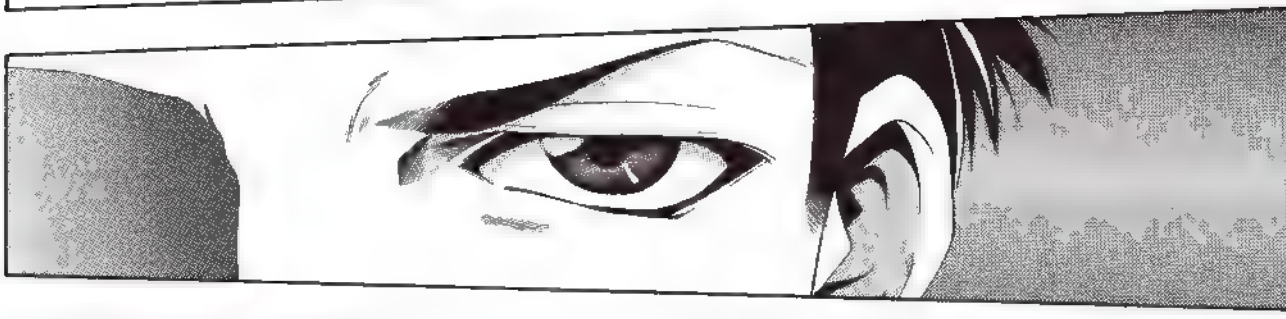
136

GROUP ONE, NUMBER 869, KAWA-BATA-KUN.
HERE!
NUM-BER 1192, TATSU-KAWA-KUN.
HERE!!


310

BUT WE'LL STILL BE COMPETING FOR THE BEST TIME.
SO, IT TURNS OUT, I'M NOT ACTUALLY RUNNING DIRECTLY AGAINST ARIMA IN THIS TOURNAMENT...
RIGHT HERE!!
910
NUMBER 910, ARIMA-KUN!
SENPAI...
HEY, WHAT'S WRONG? WHY THE LONG FACE?
NERVOUS ABOUT YOUR FIRST TIME IN THE SEMIFI-NALS?
WHAT? QUIT TALK-ING LIKE A PUSSY, THE RACE HASN'T EVEN STARTED YET.
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I JUST DON'T KNOW IF I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO...
NO... WHAT I MEAN IS...
HIS BEST TIME IS 10.46 SEC-ONDS.
136
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN BEAT HIM...

I'M NOT SURE IF I'LL HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY LEFT FOR THE RELAY AFTER THIS.



OH GREAT...
THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WANT YOU ON OUR TEAM IN THE FIRST PLACE.
AH...
WELL, YOU'D BETTER PROVE ME WRONG AND AT LEAST TAKE FIRST PLACE IN THE 100-METER DASH.
YOU'VE GOT TO BEAT ARIMA.

.....
OF COURSE, THAT'S THE PLAN...
131
136
I WON'T.
SWIP
WELL, JUST MAKE SURE YOU DON'T OVERDO IT AT THE START AND END UP TRIPPING OVER YOUR OWN TWO FEET.
I'M GONNA BECOME THE NUMBER ONE RUNNER IN JAPAN, RIGHT BEFORE ASAHINA'S EYES!!
I'M GONNA WIN THIS THING...
...EVEN IF I ONLY BEAT ARIMA BY A TENTH OF A SECOND.

THE 100-METER SEMIFINAL MUST HAVE STARTED ALREADY.
YAMATO-KUN IS IN THE FIRST GROUP. I WONDER IF HE FINISHED ALREADY.
THERE YOU ARE!
WHOOSH

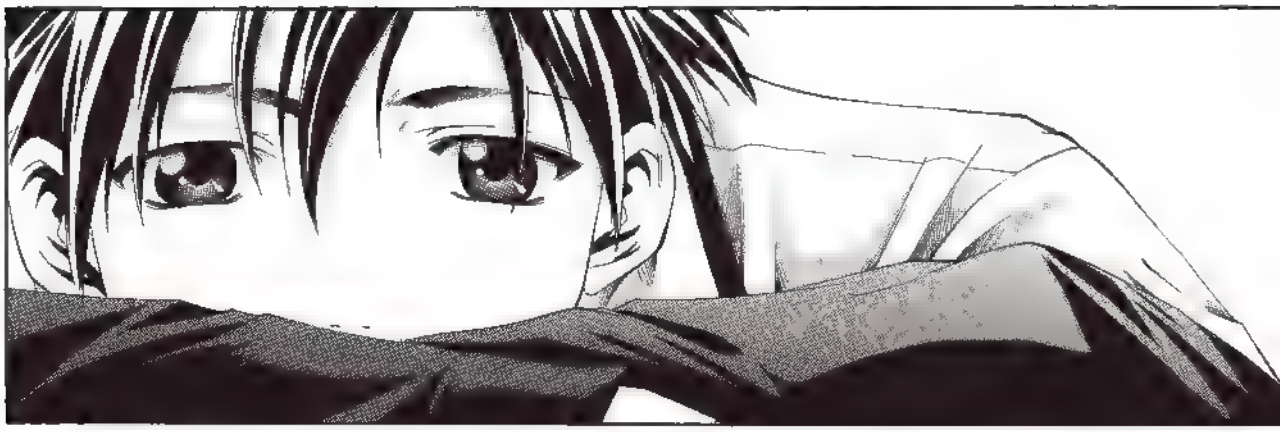
YEAH...
AKITSUKI ALREADY FINISHED HIS RACE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

HOW DID YAMATO-KUN DO...?
SO...

.....
OH YEAH...

ISN'T THAT AMAZING? I KNEW HE COULD DO IT!!

HOW DID HE DO? HE RAN IT IN 10.66 SECONDS HE'S IN FIRST PLACE WITH A HUGE LEAD!!
ON TOP OF THAT, HE BROKE THE RECORD OF 10.69 SECONDS THAT ARIMA SET AT THIS YEAR'S INTER-HIGH SCHOOL TOURNAMENT. THAT MAKES AKITSUKI THE TOP RUNNER FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR.

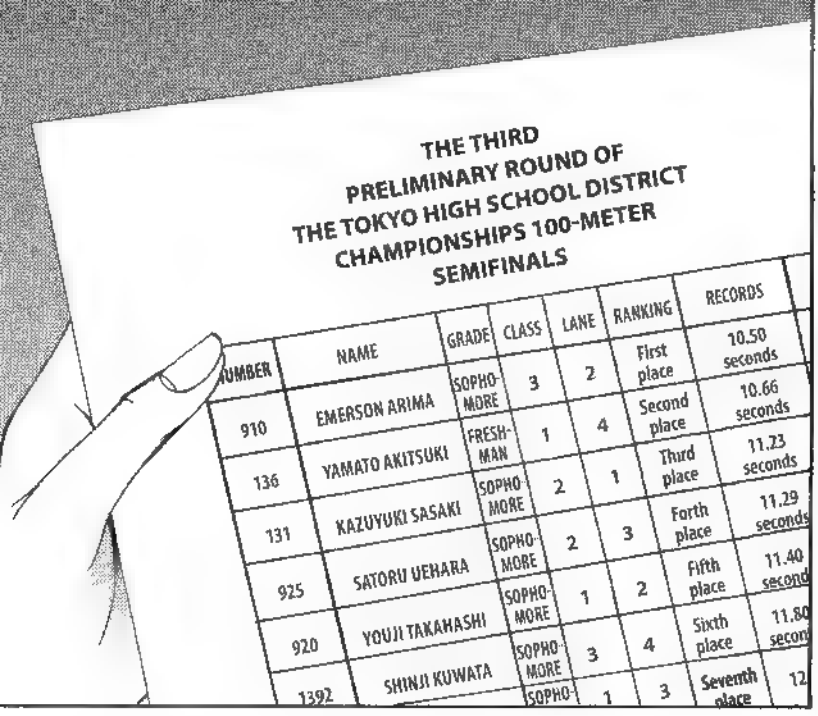


WHY DON'T YOU LIGHTEN UP A BIT?
YOU ARE THE TOP RUNNER FOR THE WHOLE YEAR.

QUIT STANDING AROUND TRYING TO LOOK ALL SERIOUS AND COOL.
36

YEAH...I WAS FOR ABOUT TEN SEC-ONDS.
.....

WHAT?



NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CLASS	LANE	RANKING	RECORDS
910	EMERSON ARIMA	SOPHO-MORE	3	2	First place	10.50 seconds
136	YAMATO AKITSUKI	FRESH-MAN	1	4	Second place	10.66 seconds
131	KAZUYUKI SASAKI	SOPHO-MORE	2	1	Third place	11.23 seconds
925	SATORU UEHARA	SOPHO-MORE	2	3	Forth place	11.29 seconds
920	YOUJI TAKAHASHI	SOPHO-MORE	1	2	Fifth place	11.40 second
1392	SHINJI KUWATA	SOPHO-MORE	3	4	Sixth place	11.80 secon
		SOPHO-	1	3	Seventh place	12

B-BUT STILL, IT'S AMAZING. 10.66 SECONDS!!
THAT MEANS YOU'RE IN SECOND PLACE FOR THE INTER HIGH. BESIDES, YOU STILL MADE IT INTO THE TOKYO HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT CHAMPION-SHIPS.
.....

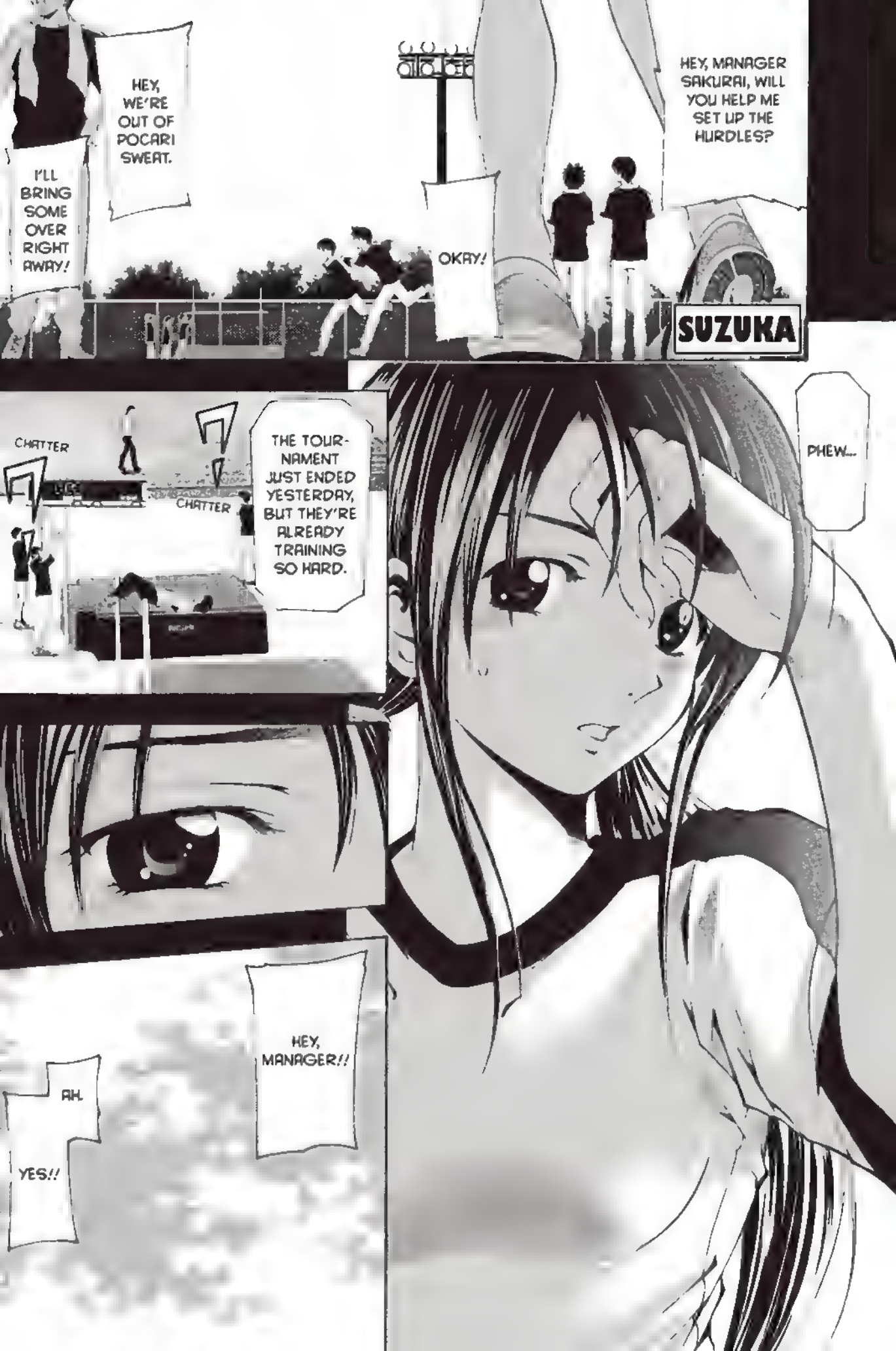
SECOND AND THIRD DON'T MEAN SHIT TO ME.

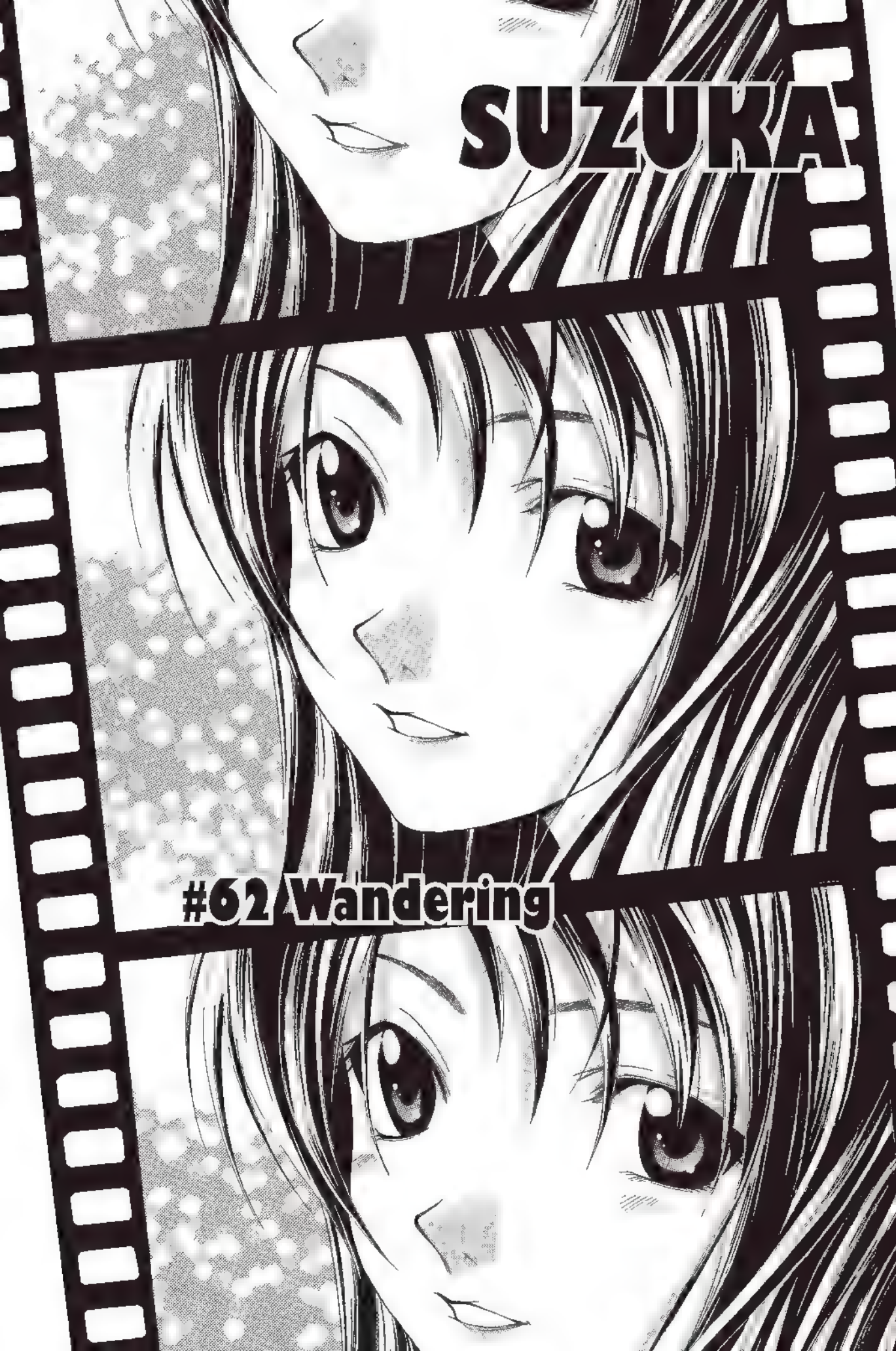
I'VE...
...GOT TO BE NUMBER ONE!

ドド
THUMP
ドド
THUMP

I'M MUCH BETTER AT TAKING OFF NOW...
AND I DON'T THINK MY FORM WHEN I'M SPRINTING AT TOP SPEED LOOKS THAT BAD.
36
HEY...WHAT DO YOU THINK'S WRONG WITH ME?
WHAT!?
BUT I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE I START TO LOSE MOMENTUM DURING THE LAST TWENTY METERS.
I THOUGHT I MIGHT BE DOING SOMETHING WRONG.
UM... WELL...
HMM...
OH WELL... YOU ARE A HIGH-JUMPER, SO I GUESS YOU WOULDN'T KNOW...
I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE TECHNICAL STUFF, UM...
SORRY...
I KNOW! I'LL GO ASK THE EX-CAPTAIN.
SORRY FOR ASKING SUCH A WEIRD QUESTION.
TH-THAT'S OKAY.

PHEW...
FLIP
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHAT'S GOING ON...?
SUDDENLY HE'S TAKING EVERYTHING SO SERIOUSLY...


HEY, MANAGER SAKURAI, WILL YOU HELP ME SET UP THE HURDLES?
OKAY!
HEY, WE'RE OUT OF POCARI SWEAT.
I'LL BRING SOME OVER RIGHT AWAY!
SUZUKA
PHEW...
THE TOURNAMENT JUST ENDED YESTERDAY, BUT THEY'RE ALREADY TRAINING SO HARD.
CHATTER
CHATTER
HEY, MANAGER!!
AH.
YES!!


SUZUKA
#62 Wandering

ALL RIGHT, WE'LL TAKE A THREE MINUTE BREAK!!
HEY, YOU!! NO SITTING DOWN!
GOD! THIS IS SO HARSH!!
AH...
AKITSUKI-KUN, HERE'S A TOWEL..
FWEESH
SWIP
!

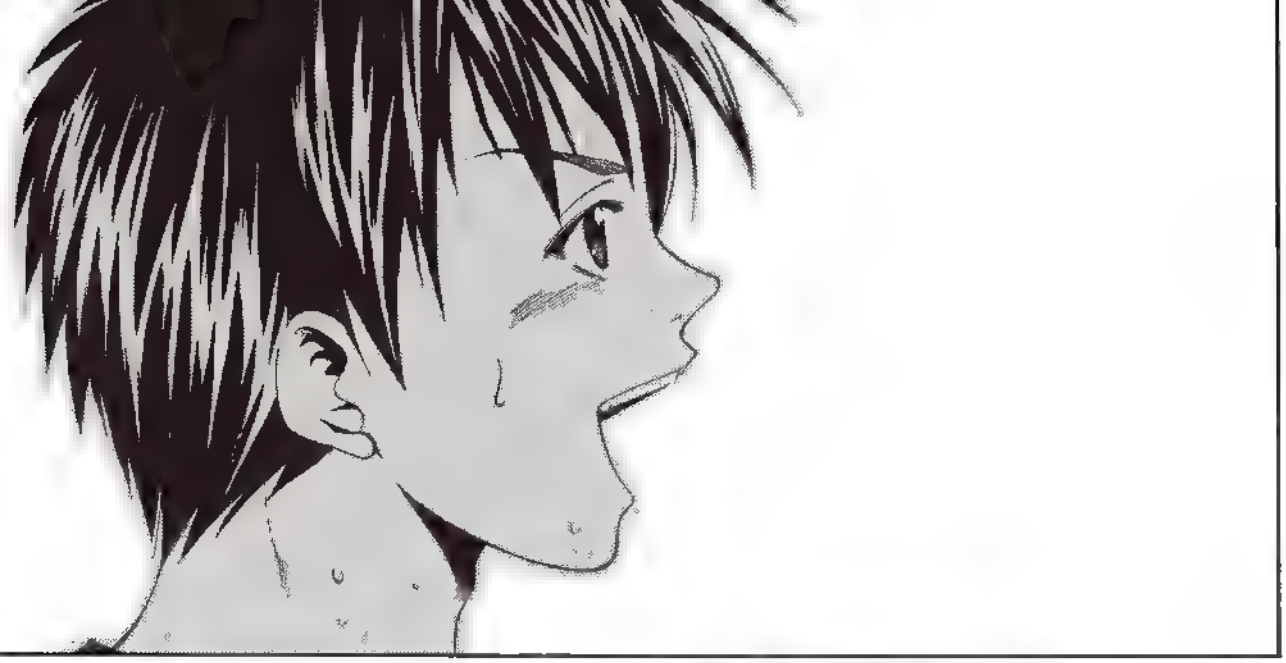
AND WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED AT YESTERDAY'S RELAY? YOU TOTALLY RAN OUT OF STEAM.
YOU'RE LUCKY YOU MADE IT TO THE TOKYO HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT CHAMPION SHIPS.
IS THAT ALL IT TAKES TO WEAR YOU OUT?
YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH STAMINA!!
W-WELL I'M STILL TIRED FROM YESTERDAY...

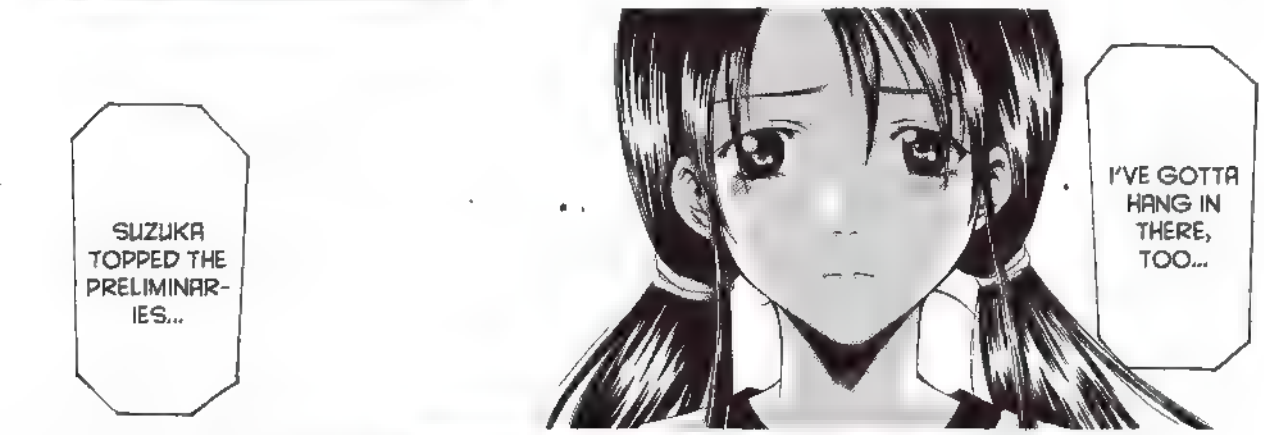
AH, THANKS!
TCH
BUT YOU DID DO A GOOD JOB PASSING THE BATON, AKITSUKI

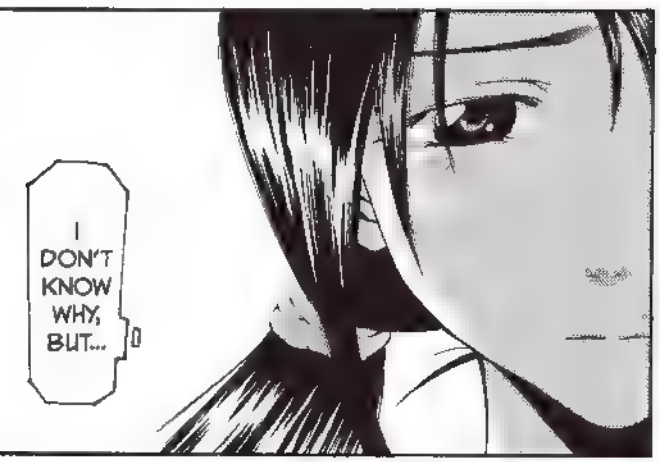
OH, NOTHING REALLY
WHAT DID YOU GUYS DO?

THIS TIME I'M GONNA BE COMPETING WITH MY MATES FROM TOKYO IN THE TOKYO DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS. I'M REALLY GONNA HAVE TO WORK HARD
PRACTICE! THAT'S THE ANSWER. PRACTICE!!

MAYBE I DESERVE THE CREDIT FOR THAT.




SUZUKA TOPPED THE PRELIMINARIES...
I'VE GOTTA HANG IN THERE, TOO...


I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT...

I'M STARTING TO FEEL LIKE AKITSUKI-KUN IS LEAVING ME BEHIND.

WHAT/?
WHAT IS IT/?
SORRY, I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

AH, I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!!

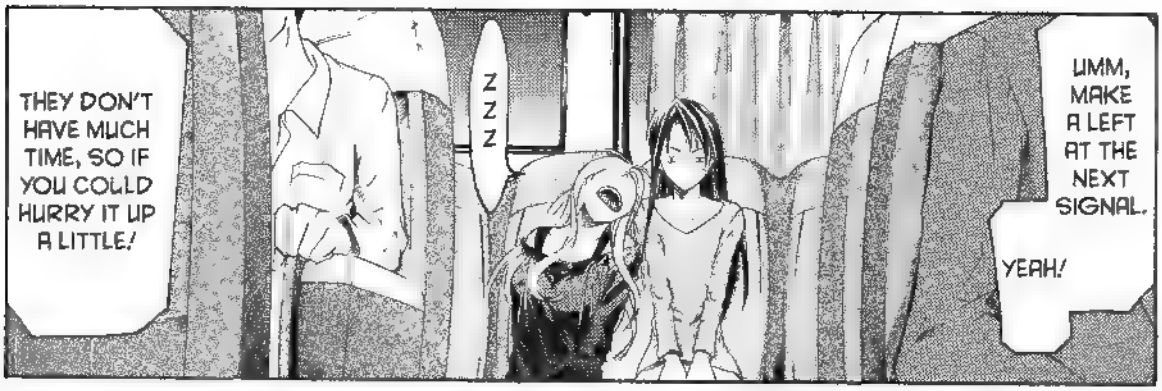
YOU SURE?
CHATTER
WELL, IF YOU SAY SO...
CHATTER

I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU AT WORK.
I'LL CALL BACK LATER.
UH...NO, I'M FINE. YEAH... I JUST WANTED TO TALK...

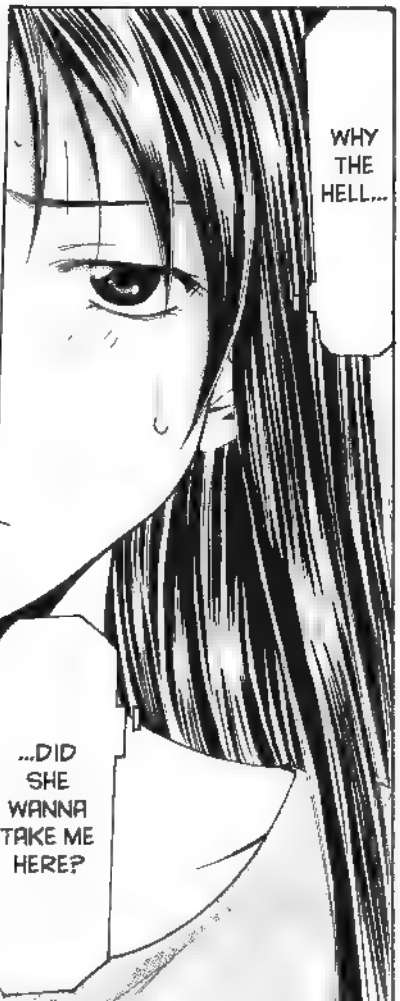
OKAY, TALK TO YOU LATER THEN.
AH/ WAIT A MINUTE!!

UH...
YEAH... I DON'T HAVE TRACK PRACTICE IN THE AFTERNOON, SO...
HONOKA, ARE YOU FREE...
...THIS SUNDAY AFTER-NOON?
THEN, WILL YOU COME TO WORK WITH ME?
GREAT!
BEEP
BEEP
WHAT'S SHE TALKING ABOUT? GO WITH HER TO WORK...?
W-WORK? WHY WOULD YOU WANT ME TO--?
AH, SORRY, GOTTA GO! I'LL GIVE YOU THE DETAILS LATER!
CLICK

SUNDAY


UMM, MAKE A LEFT AT THE NEXT SIGNAL.
YEAH!
ZZZ
THEY DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME, SO IF YOU COULD HURRY IT UP A LITTLE!

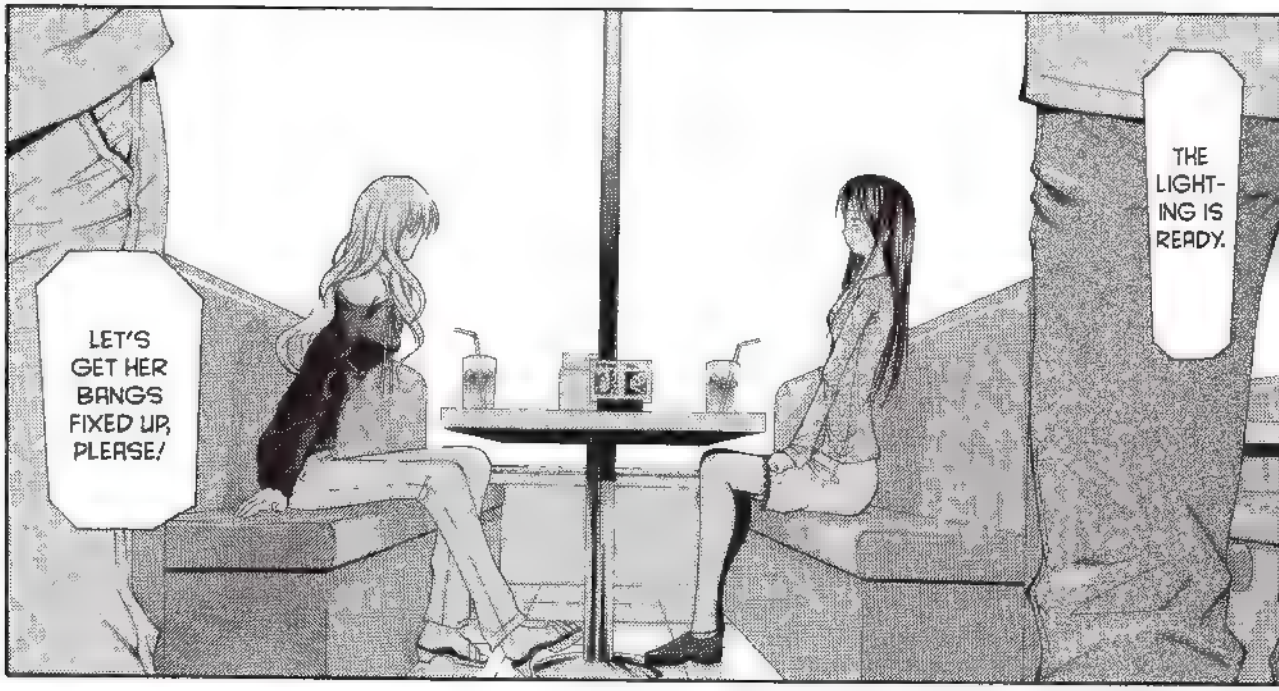
THANKS FOR HELPING US TODAY.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU!
AH... NICE TO MEET YOU, TOO.
PARDON ME. I FORGOT TO INTRO-DUCE MYSELF. MY NAME IS ONODERA, I'M NANA SHI-RAKAWA'S MANAGER.
Onodera


WHY THE HELL...
...DID SHE WANNA TAKE ME HERE?

UH... SO
WHY DID YOU WANT ME HERE TODAY?

WELL...IF I'D TOLD HER THE TRUTH, SHE WOULD NEVER HAVE COME.
FWIP
WHAT'S GOING ON, NANA?
NO...
WHAT? DIDN'T NANA EXPLAIN?
THE THING IS, WE'RE PLANNING TO DO THIS MAGAZINE PIECE ABOUT NANA'S PRIVATE LIFE.
I AM SO SORRY. I GUESS YOU DIDN'T GET THE DETAILS...
UH...
PLE-ASE, HO-NOKA.
YOU'RE THE ONLY FRIEND THAT I HAVE—
OH...
WE WANT A SHOT OF NANA CHATTING WITH A FRIEND IN A CAFÉ ON HER DAY OFF.
WAKE ME UP IN TEN MINUTES, OKAY...
...WHAT!?

NO WAY!! I JUST CAN'T!!
I-I CAN'T DO THAT!!


LET'S GET HER BANGS FIXED UP, PLEASE!
THE LIGHTING IS READY.

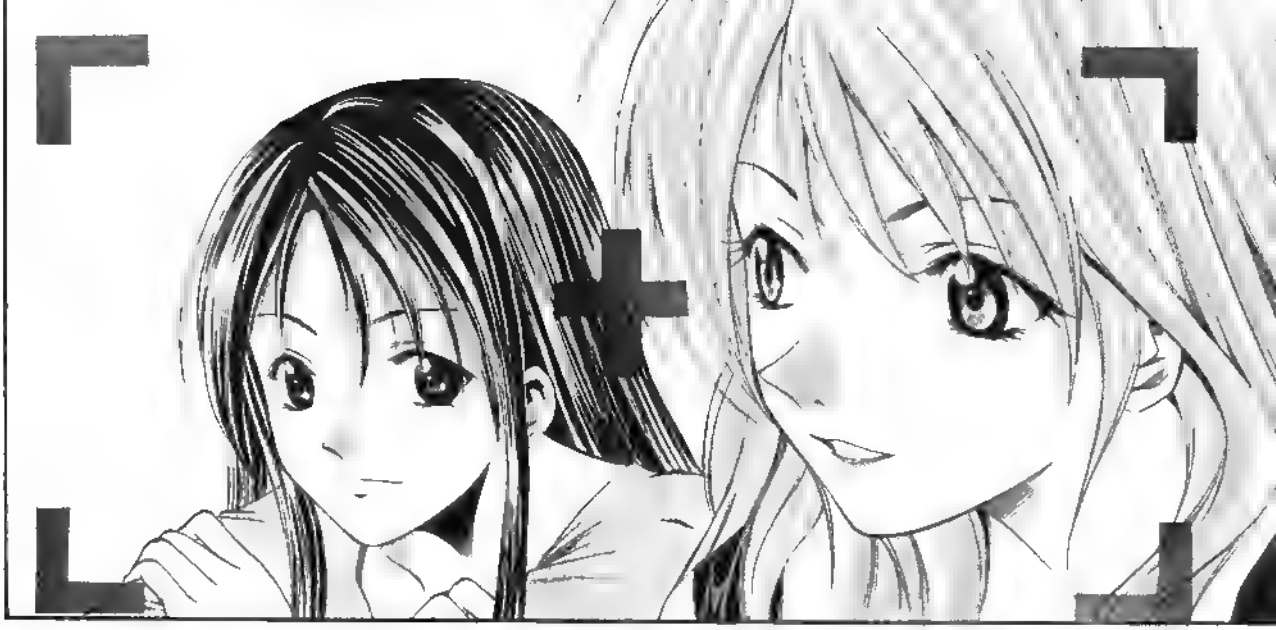
IT'S OKAY. DON'T WORRY.
YOUR FACE WILL HARDLY EVEN SHOW IN THE PHOTO.

Y-YEAH...
WE'VE GOT THIS PLACE RESERVED FOR AN HOUR... IT'S JUST US!
ISN'T THAT GREAT?

I'LL TIME THE SHOT SO IT LOOKS NATURAL.
JUST LOOK LIKE YOU'RE TALKING AND HAVING A GOOD TIME.
ALL RIGHT, WE'RE READY TO SHOOT!
BUT...
DON'T BE NER-VOUS.
JUST RELAX.
WHAT!?
WHAT!?
THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY...
HOW THE HECK AM I SUPPOSED TO RELAX?
LOOK AT ALL THESE PEOPLE STARING AT ME!

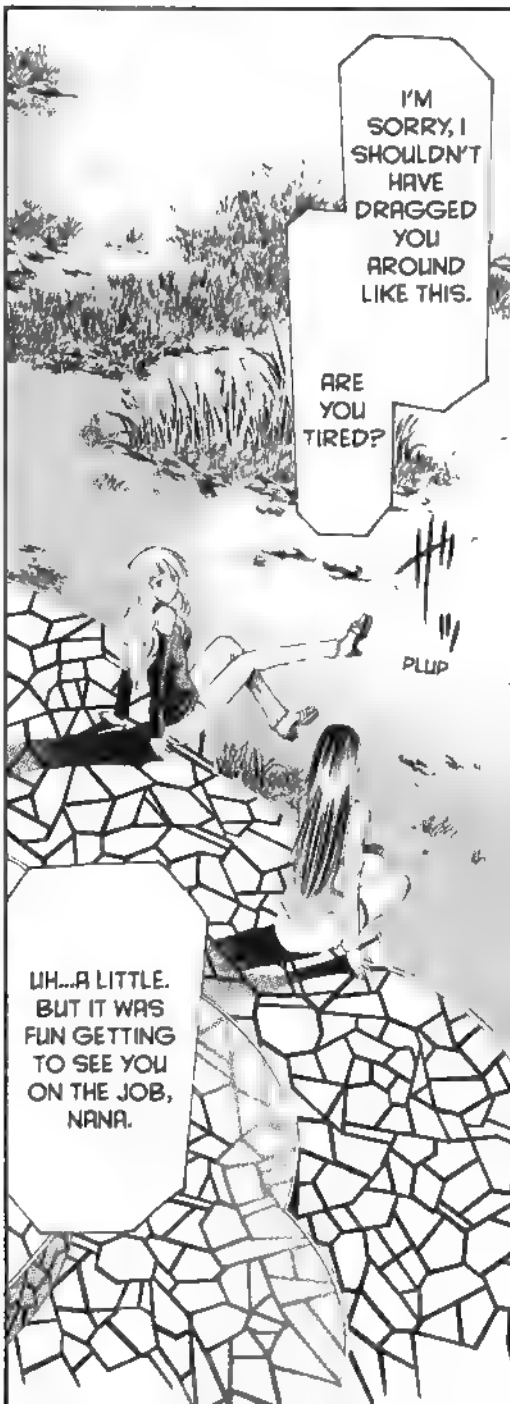
FWIPPA
HEY, LOOK AT ME!
JUST IMAGINE THAT WE'RE HAVING A NORMAL CONVERSATION.
.....
WHAT...?
IT MUST BE REALLY HARD...
...HAVING TO DO THIS ALL THE TIME, NANA-CHAN
NOT REALLY.
I LIKE WHAT I DO.
OH...

DON'T TRY TOO HARD, JUST RELAX...
S-SORRY!! I'LL TRY!!
AH!
UMM...CAN YOU TRY TO LOOK LIKE YOU'RE HAVING A BIT MORE FUN?
ZAA
TAP
SHE LOOKS GREAT WHEN SHE'S NOT IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA, BUT...
I DON'T THINK WE CAN USE THESE SHOTS.
SHE LOOKS SO STIFF.



WELL, I'D BEEN SO BUSY LATELY AND I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO SEE YOU, HONOKA-CHAN.
SO, I WAS KIND OF WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
HUH? WHY?

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT STILL BE DEPRESSED ABOUT THE BREAK-UP...
OR HAVE YOU ALREADY MET SOMEONE NEW?


I'M SORRY, I SHOULDN'T HAVE DRAGGED YOU AROUND LIKE THIS.
ARE YOU TIRED?
PLOP
UH...A LITTLE. BUT IT WAS FUN GETTING TO SEE YOU ON THE JOB, NANA.

YEAH...
W-WELL...
WHAT? YOU DID?
WHO IS IT!? SOMEBODY FROM YOUR TRACK TEAM!?
WHAT...?
IT'S... AKIT-SUKI-KUN...
WHEN I BECOME A LITTLE MORE CONFI-DENT...
I WANT TO TELL HIM HOW I FEEL AGAIN.

BUT, LATELY, HE SEEMS SO DISTANT.
AND IT'S LIKE THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT...EXCEPT GET ALL FRUS-TRATED.
I SEE...
YEAH...
HONOKA...
BUT...
AH...NO, THAT'S OKAY! SORRY FOR RAMBLING ON ABOUT MY BORING LIFE!!
I JUST NEEDED TO GET THAT OFF MY CHEST.
ALL RIGHT, NANA. WE'VE GOT A BEAUTIFUL SUNSET IN THE BACK-GROUND NOW, LET'S SHOOT IT!!
HUH? AH... I JUST NEED A COUPLE MINUTES WITH HO-NOKA...
SORRY, I HAVE TO GO! YOU CAN TELL ME MORE ABOUT IT LATER.
COME ON, HURRY UP!!

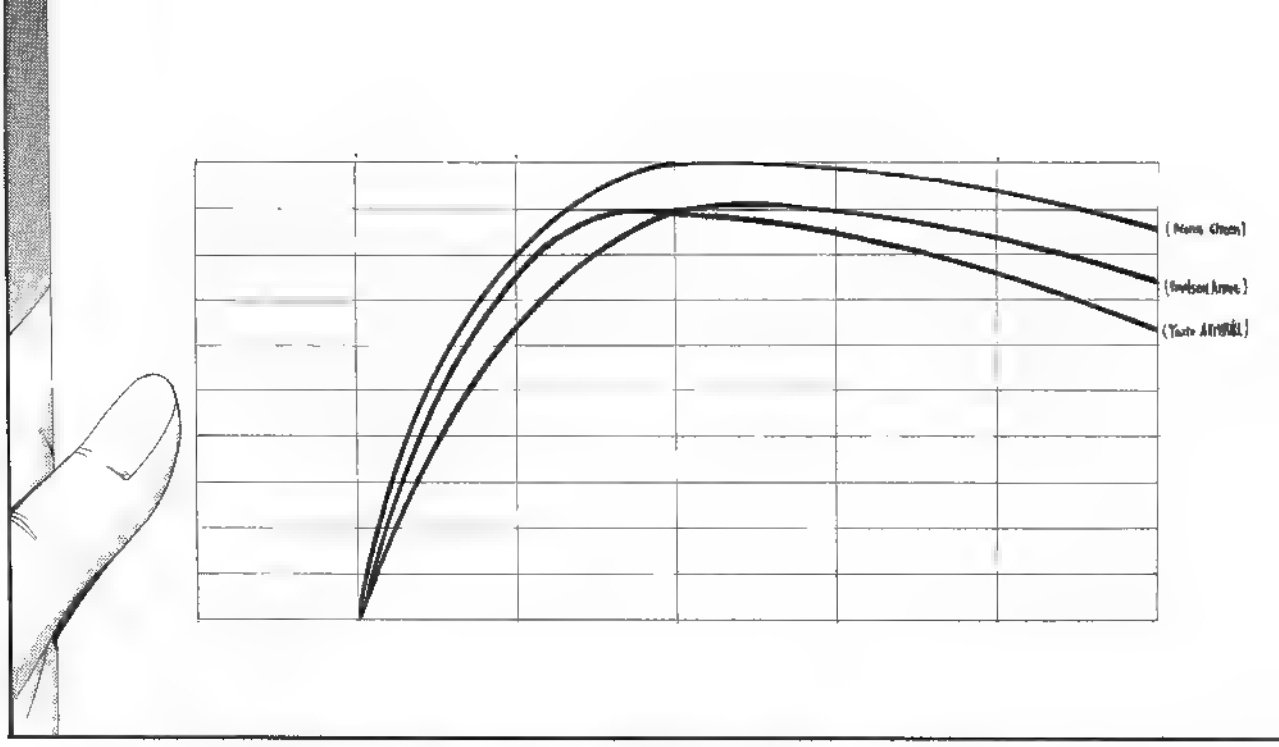
OKAY, LOOK OVER HERE AND GIVE ME A NICE SMILE!
PERFECT. OKAY, OKAY!!
.....
I'M TOTALLY GETTING IN THE WAY OF HER WORK.
CLICK
CLICK
NANA IS AMAZ-ING.
THEY JUST TELL HER WHAT THEY WANT AND SHE GIVES IT TO THEM, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME.
NOT REALLY.
I LIKE WHAT I DO.

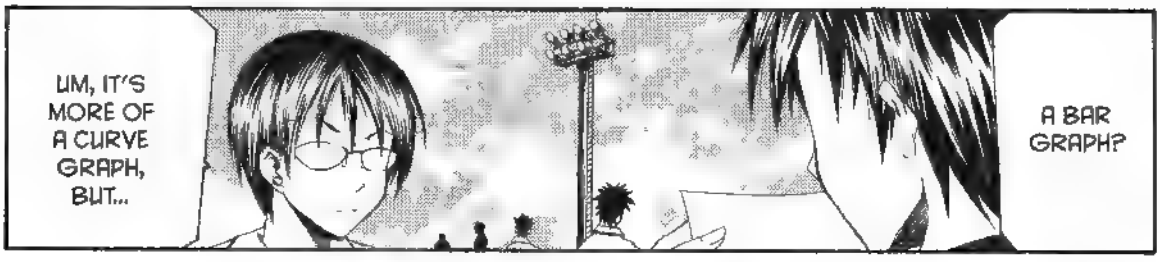
I'VE GOTTA HANG IN THERE, TOO.
THIS TIME, I'M GONNA BE COMPETING WITH ARIMA FROM TOUTO PREP AT THE TOKYO DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS.
SUZUKA TOPPED THE PRELIMINARIES...
I'M REALLY GONNA HAVE TO WORK HARD.
.....
WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

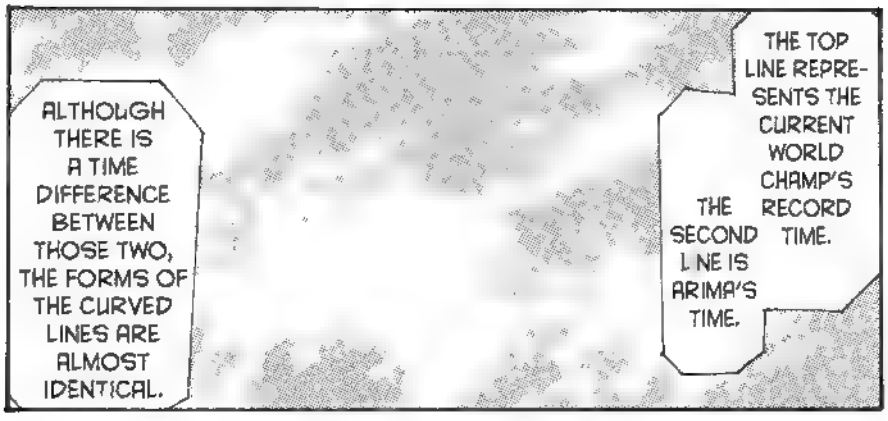
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
CLICK
ARIMA 0 3.6
AKITSUKI 0 3.1
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
.....
HMM...

#63 Acceleration

ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET TO WORK!
AKITSUKI, CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A SEC?
AH... YEAH.
YOU SAID YOU FELT LIKE YOU WERE LOSING MOMENTUM DURING THE LAST HALF OF THE 100-METER DASH, RIGHT?
YEAH...
WELL...
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT, AND I CAME UP WITH THIS...




UM, IT'S MORE OF A CURVE GRAPH, BUT...
A BAR GRAPH?


ALTHOUGH THERE IS A TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE TWO, THE FORMS OF THE CURVED LINES ARE ALMOST IDENTICAL.
THE TOP LINE REPRESENTS THE CURRENT WORLD CHAMP'S RECORD TIME.
THE SECOND LINE IS ARIMA'S TIME.

THIS SHOWS YOUR TIME VERSUS ARIMA'S TIME IN TWENTY-METER INTERVALS.

IN OTHER WORDS...
ARIMA HAS THE KIND OF STYLE AND FORM THAT COULD MAKE HIM NUMBER ONE IN THE WORLD SOME DAY.

BUT, IF WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE THIRD LINE DOWN, THE ONE THAT REPRESENTS YOU...
TAP
YOU REACH TOP SPEED VERY EARLY IN THE RACE, AND THEN YOU GRADUALLY START TO LOSE SPEED.
THE TOP SPEED REACHED IS ABOUT THE SAME AS ARIMA'S, BUT...
I NEED TO MAINTAIN MY TOP SPEED FOR A LONGER PERIOD, RIGHT?
SO, WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY IS...
THAT'S PHYSICALLY IMPOS-SIBLE.
NO ONE CAN RUN AT MAXIMUM VELOCITY FOR MORE THAN SIX SECONDS.
THWUP
SO, YOU'RE SAYING I CAN NEVER BEAT THIS GUY!?
J-JUST HEAR ME OUT.

IF YOU JUST HOLD BACK A LITTLE, AND LET YOURSELF GRADUALLY REACH TOP SPEED...
YOU CAN SHORTEN THE AMOUNT OF TIME THAT YOU'RE DECELERATING

YOU CAN'T RUN ANY LONGER AT MAX VELOCITY, BUT...
"IT IS POSSIBLE TO WAIT TILL THE LATTER HALF OF THE RACE BEFORE YOU REACH PEAK ACCELERATION
WHAT...?

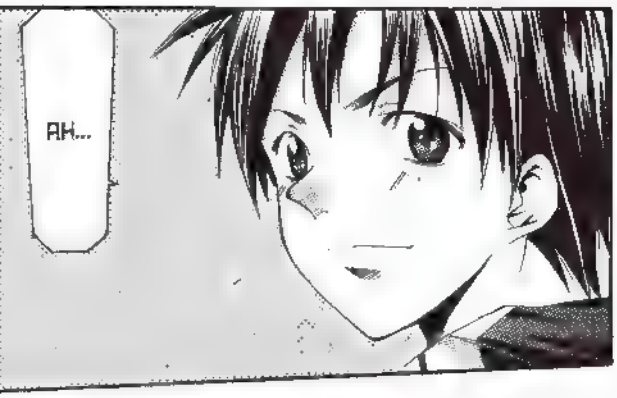
AND THEN I'D BE ABLE TO FINISH WITH A BETTER TIME!?
WELL, MAYBE...

"ALL RIGHT THEN...
STARTING TODAY, I'M GONNA TAILOR YOUR TRAINING SO YOU CAN FOCUS ON ALTERING YOUR STYLE

BUT IT'S VERY HARD TO JUST CHANGE YOUR RUNNING STYLE LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW?
AND WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT BEFORE THE DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS, SO YOU'RE PROBABLY BETTER OFF STICKING TO YOUR CURRENT STYLE IF YOU CAN'T PERFECT THE NEW ONE
I CAN DO IT!!

I FOUND A WAY TO BECOME FASTER...!
ALL RIGHT!

COME SEE ME AFTER YOU WARM UP.
THANKS A LOT!!


AH...

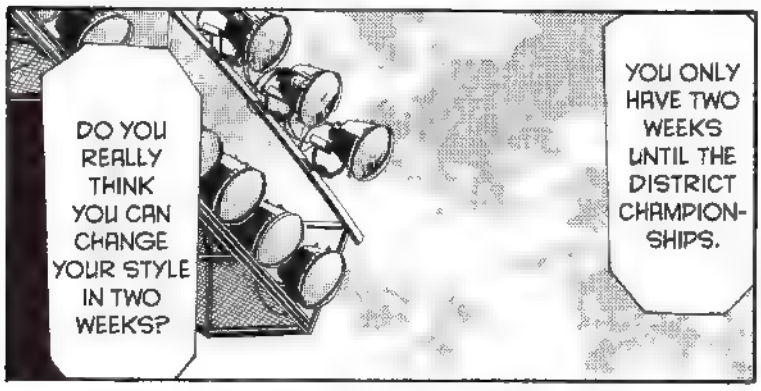
HEY, ASAHINA. I'VE FIGURED OUT THE PROBLEM I WAS TALKING ABOUT THE OTHER DAY!
HUH!?
WHAT PROB-LEM...?

STEP
STEP

IT LOOKS LIKE MY RUNNING STYLE WAS NO GOOD.
BUT IF I CAN CHANGE IT, I'LL BE ABLE TO RUN FASTER.

YOU KNOW HOW I WAS SAYING THAT I ALWAYS LOSE MOMENTUM TOWARD THE END OF THE 100 METER DASH?
AH...YEAH...I REMEMBER NOW...

ARE YOU SURE?
SOUNDS A LITTLE TOO SIMPLE...


YOU ONLY HAVE TWO WEEKS UNTIL THE DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS.
DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR STYLE IN TWO WEEKS?

IT'S TRUE. MIYAMOTO-SENPAI FIGURED IT OUT.
E-EVEN IF HE'S RIGHT...

IT TAKES A LOT OF TIME TO FIX SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
IF YOU ASK ME, THAT SOUNDS TOTALLY IMPOSSIBLE!!

.....
WHAT'S WITH YOU? YOU'RE ACTING REALLY WEIRD.
.....!!
SHUT UP, JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!!
YOU ARE SUCH AN IDIOT!!
WHAT!?
GO AHEAD, RUN HOWEVER YOU WANT. I COULD CARE LESS.
AH...
HEY, ASA-HINA!!
COME ON!!

ARE YOU GUYS FIGHTING AGAIN?
YOU GUYS MUST REALLY HATE EACH OTHER.
N-NO WE DON'T!!
.....
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT ABOUT...
SHE'S TOTALLY NUTS...AS USUAL...
WHOOSH
CLICK
12.99 SECONDS
0:00'00"00
-0'00"00
0'00"12"99

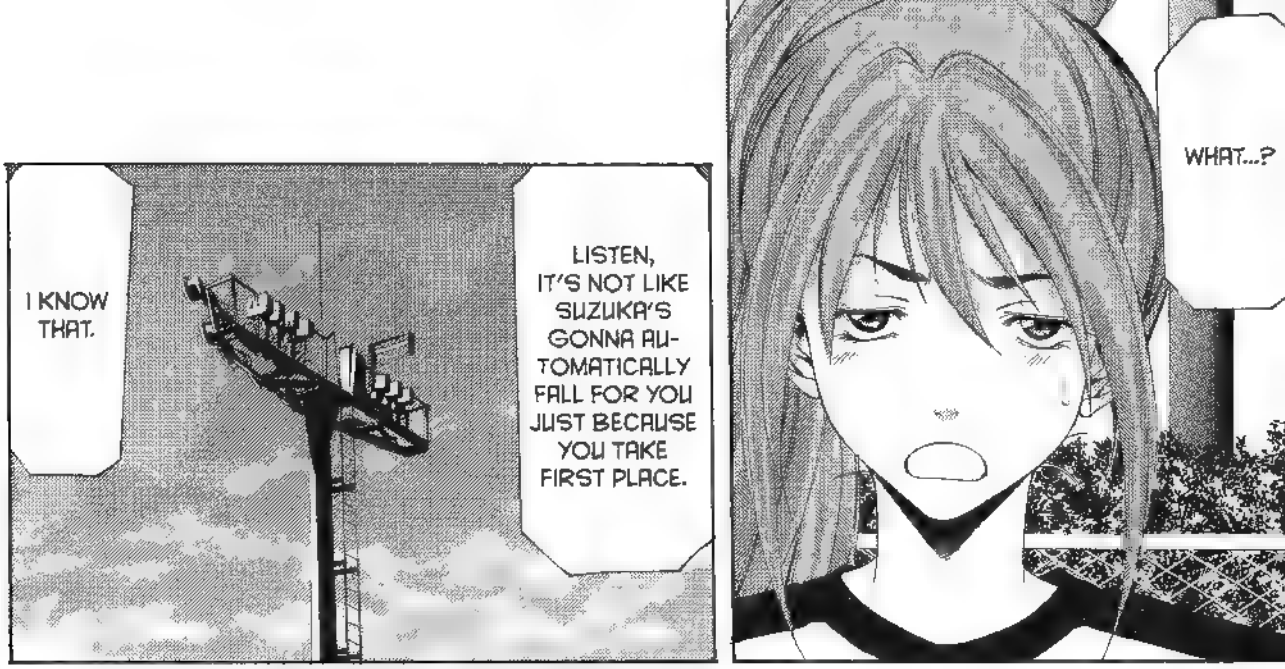
SHIT, I'M SUPPOSED TO BE GETTING FASTER, NOT SLOWER.
FWUMP
LOOK.
ARE YOU SERIOUS!?
.....
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH YOU'VE RUN SO FAR TODAY?
YOU'D BETTER STOP NOW.
FWICK
ALL RIGHT, JUST ONE MORE TIME!!
PLEASE!!
GEEZ!!

ARE YOU REALLY SORRY, OR ARE YOU JUST SAYING THAT
OF COURSE I'M SORRY
SORRY FOR MAKING YOU DO THIS WITH ME. YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON I COULD ASK.
OKAY FINE, ONE MORE TIME.
ALL RIGHT!
FWIP
ONE LAST TIME!
HEY.
WHAT?

WHAT HAS GOTTEN INTO YOU LATELY...? YOU SEEM KIND OF DIFFERENT.
YOU'VE CHANGED A LOT SINCE WE PRACTICED WITH THE BATON THAT TIME.
OH... REALLY?
I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY, BUT I DO FEEL LIKE I HAVE A CLEAR GOAL NOW.
WHAT GOAL?
I WANT TO BE NUMBER ONE.
I WANT TO BEAT ARIMA, AND BECOME THE NUMBER ONE RUNNER IN JAPAN!!
.....
WELL, I'M PRETTY SURE YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE THAT DREAM A REALITY, BUT...

WHAT WAS IT?
DOES IT REALLY MATTER?
HUH...
WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT WAS IT THAT SUDDENLY MADE YOU WANNA BE NUMBER ONE?
IS IT BECAUSE...
YOU STILL LIKE SUZUKA?

AM I WRONG?
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
I WANT TO MAKE IT TO NUMBER ONE, AND THEN I'LL TRY TELLING HER HOW I FEEL AGAIN.


I KNOW THAT.
LISTEN, IT'S NOT LIKE SUZUKA'S GONNA AUTOMATICALLY FALL FOR YOU JUST BECAUSE YOU TAKE FIRST PLACE.
WHAT...?

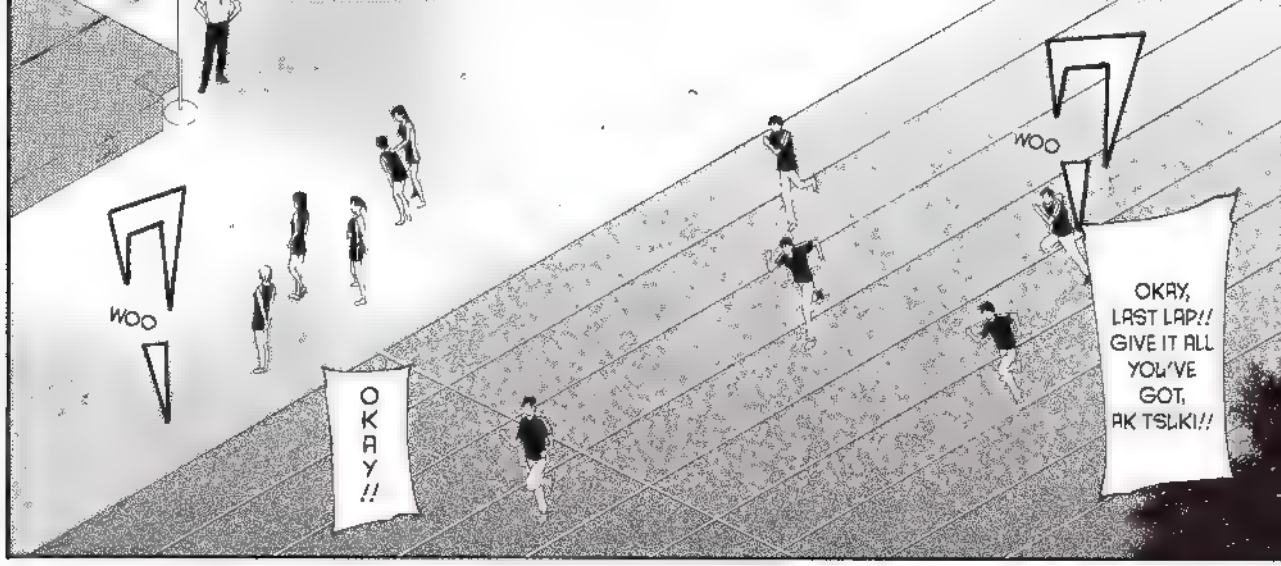
AND THAT'S NOT EVEN WHAT I MEANT.
ASAHINA'S NOT LIKE THAT.

I JUST WON'T FEEL LIKE I'M ASAHINA'S EQUAL.
IT'S JUST THAT UNLESS I REACH THAT GOAL, I FEEL LIKE I WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE FORWARD, YOU KNOW.

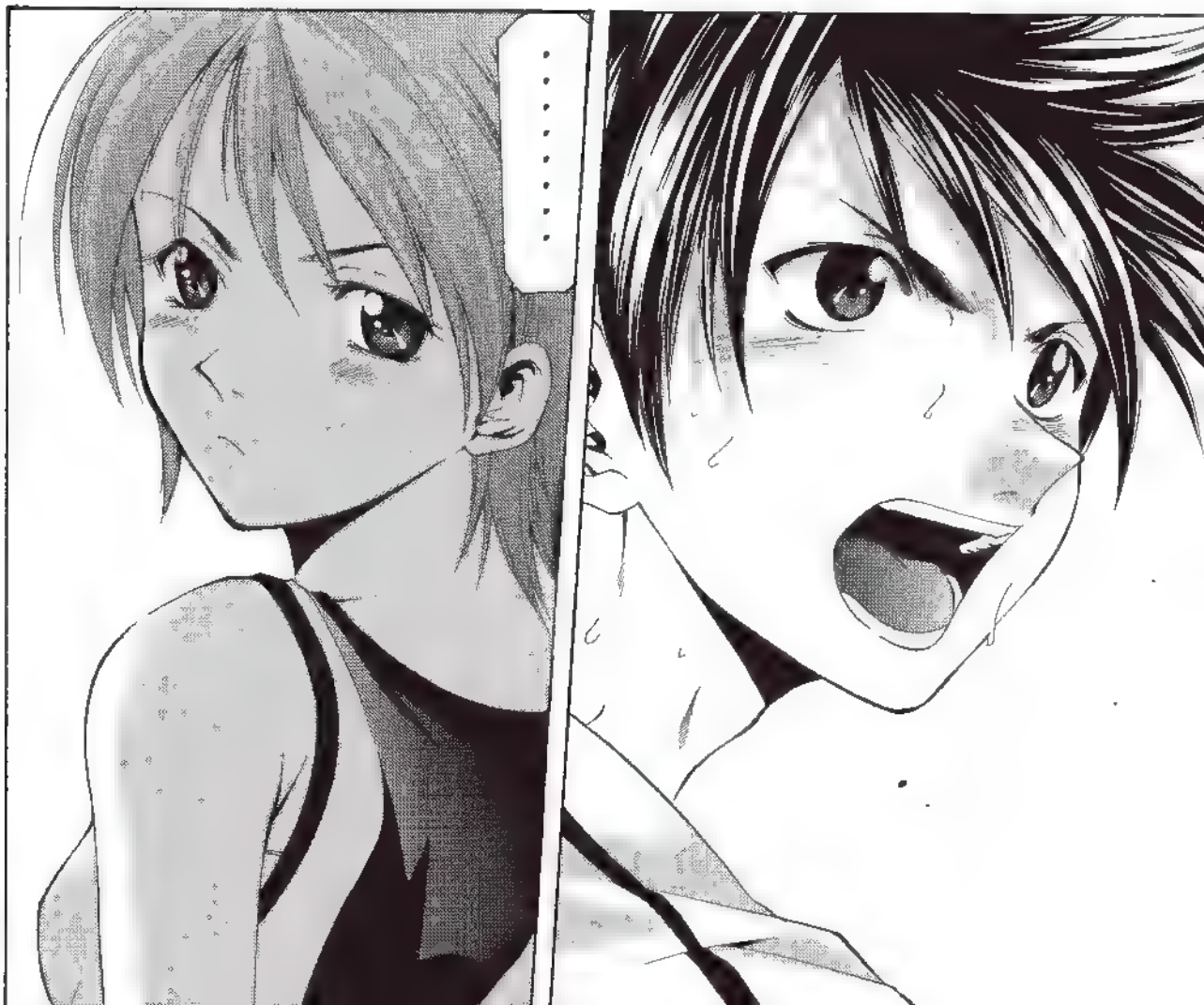
UH-HUH.
.....
YOU SHOULD AT LEAST BUY ME DINNER.
OTHERWISE, WHAT DO I GET OUT OF ALL THIS?
THAT'S IT. I'VE HAD ENOUGH. QUIT TRYING TO SUCK ME INTO YOUR DRAMA.
AH... HASHIBA.
OKAY, OKAY. DO YOU WANT TO GO OUT FOR *OKONOMIYAKI* LATER?
NO!! I WANT SOMETHING MORE EXPENSIVE!!
WHAT ARE YOU SO MAD ABOUT...

BANG
I'M NOT MAD!!
...NUMBER ONE...
I WANT TO BE...
GOD! WHAT'S HIS DEAL?!
SERIOUSLY. WHAT IS HE THINKING?
.....

#64 Encouragement

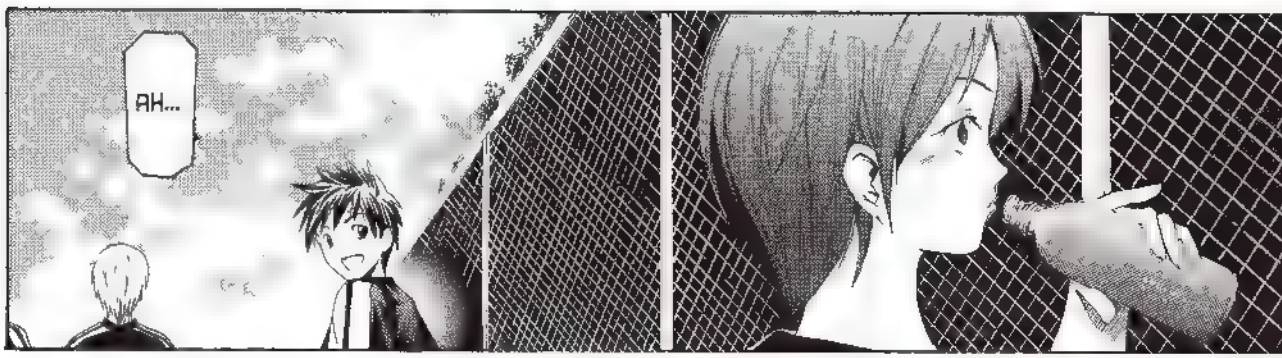

WOO
OKAY!!
WOO
OKAY, LAST LAP!! GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT, AK TSUKI!!

WHOOSH


.....

AKITSUKI? CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A MINUTE?
PHEW!! IT'S FINALLY OVER!!
OKAY! THREE MINUTE BREAK!!
I WAS LOOKING AT YOUR TIMES FROM YESTERDAY.
FLIP
I MADE A GRAPH SHOWING YOUR TIMES FROM THE PAST WEEK AND...
NO. LOOK AT THIS.
YOU WERE PRACTICING PRETTY HARD, SO YOUR SPEED WENT DOWN A BIT, BUT...
THE CURVE HERE SHOWS THAT YOUR SPEED IS GETTING PRETTY CLOSE TO MATCHING ARIMA'S.
IS THERE A PROBLEM...
...WITH THE WAY I RUN?

衛門
A-ALL RIGHT. I'LL DO MY BEST!!
OKAY, JUST DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO HARD, OKAY?
WHAT? SERI-OUSLY!?
YEP. AT THIS RATE, YOU MIGHT HAVE THE NEW STYLE DOWN IN TIME FOR THE BIG RACE.


AH...

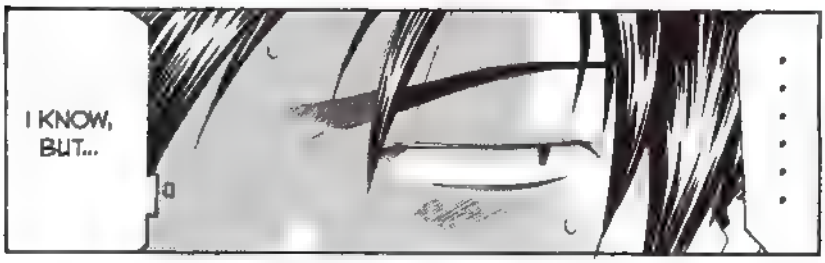
FWOOSH
MIYAMOTO-SENPAI JUST TOLD ME THAT...
MY FORM IS GETTING BETTER!!

ASAHINA!

WELL, YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING RIGHT AT PRACTICE...
...AND STILL MESS UP WHEN IT COUNTS, YOU KNOW? HAPPENS ALL THE TIME.
AH...
YEAH, BUT...
YOU MIGHT BE DOING WELL RIGHT NOW, BUT...
DON'T LET IT GET TO YOUR HEAD.
SWIP
AH..../ HEY, ASAHINA.
CLOP
カツン
CLOP
カツン

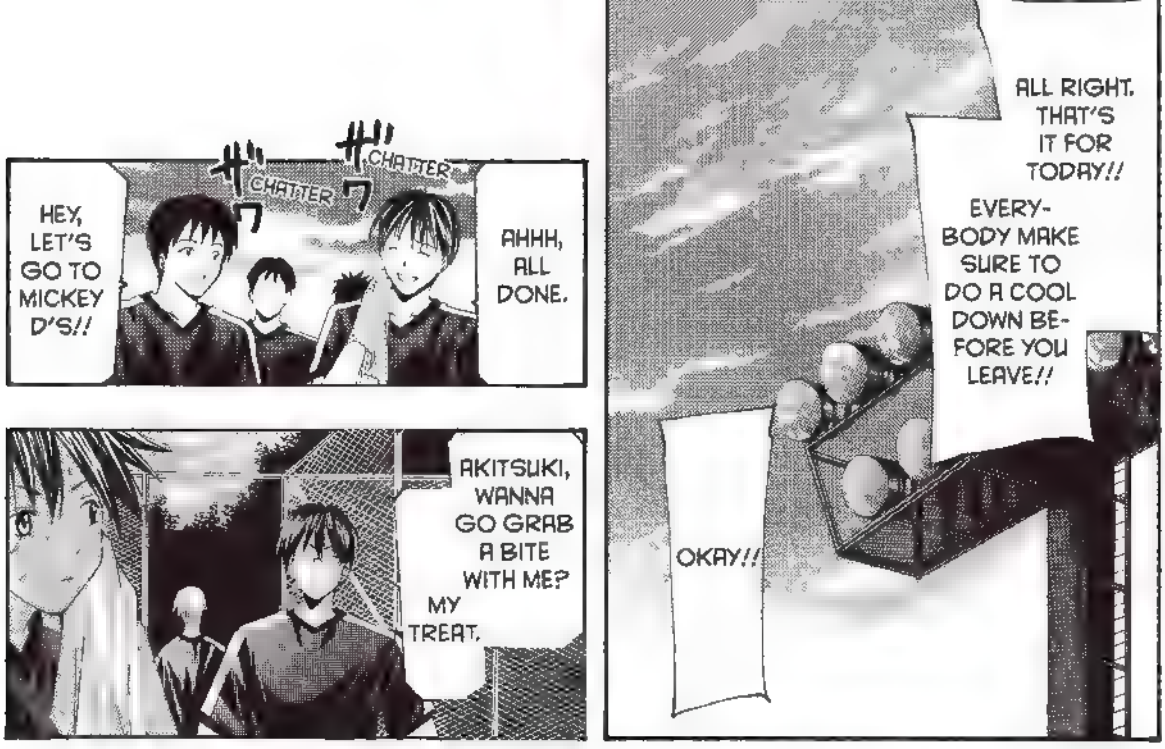
WHAT IS HER PROBLEM?
DID SHE HAVE TO PUT IT LIKE THAT...

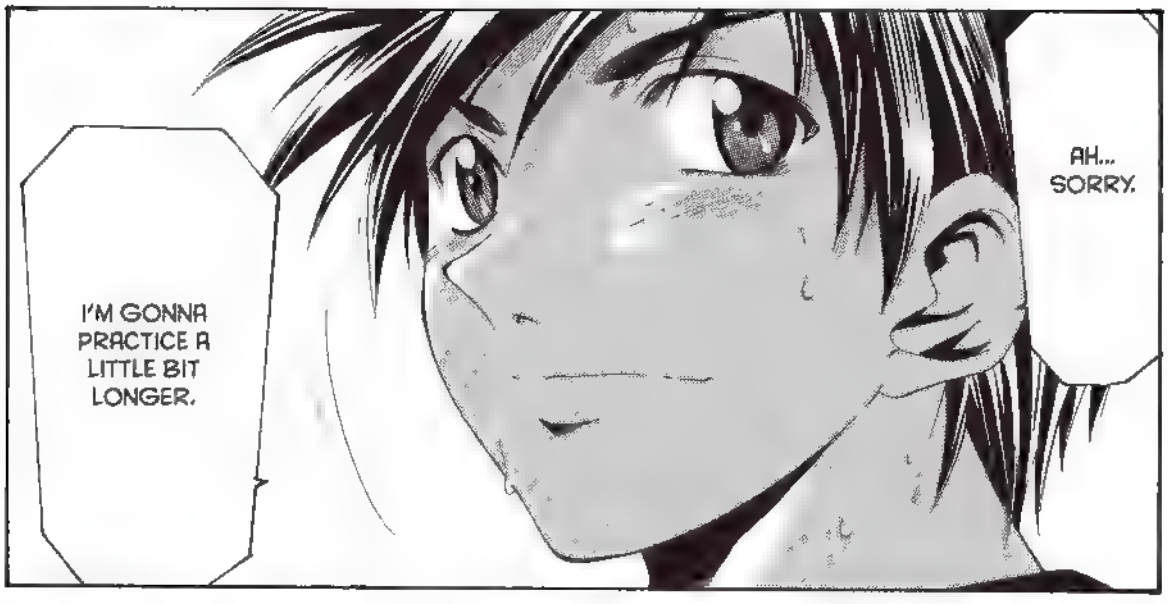
LISTEN, IT'S NOT LIKE SUZUKA'S GONNA
...AUTOMATI-CALLY FALL FOR YOU JUST BECAUSE YOU TAKE FIRST PLACE...


I KNOW, BUT...
.....

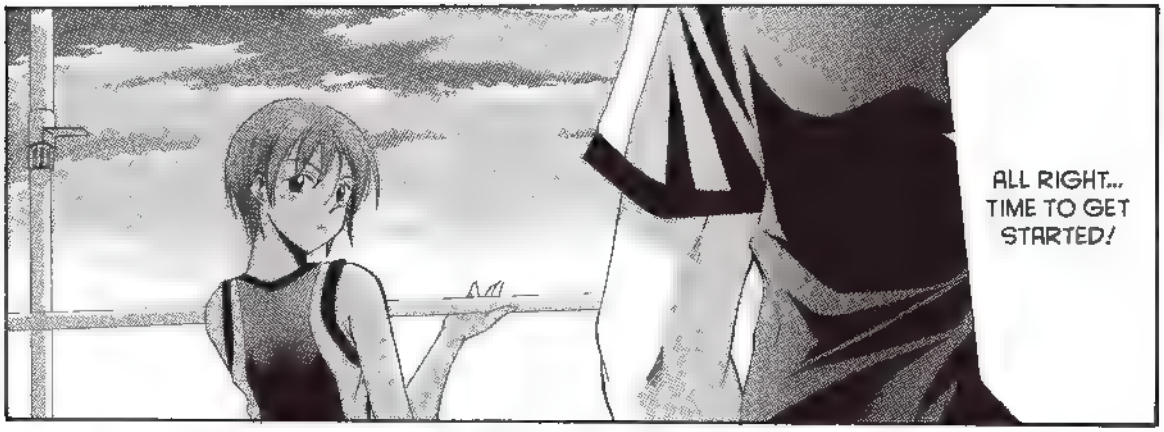
F-FORGET IT, I'VE JUST GOTTA KEEP TRAIN-ING!!
YEAH!
THAT'S ALL I CAN DO RIGHT NOW!!

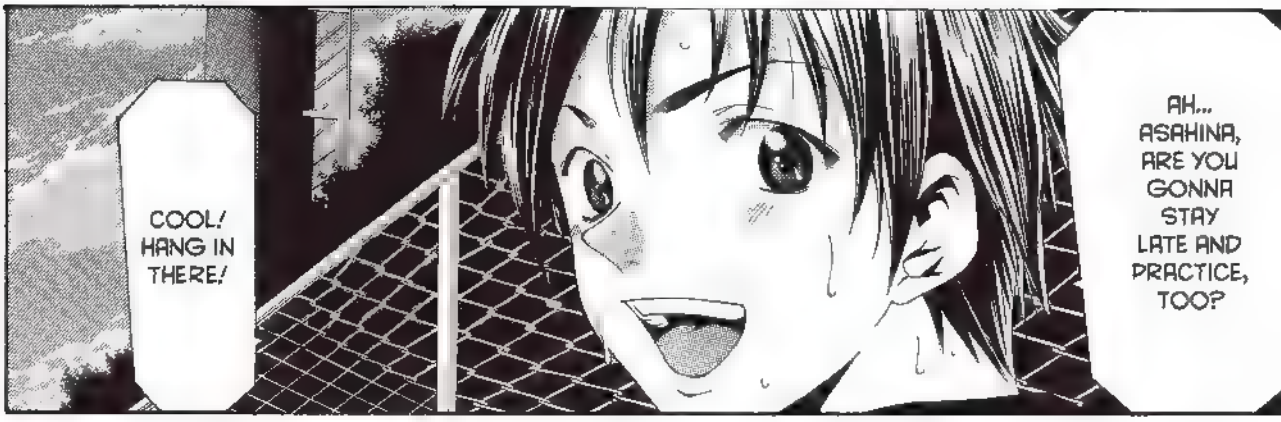
TCH, SHE DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A CLUE...
WHY I'M OUT HERE TRYING SO HARD EVERY DAY?

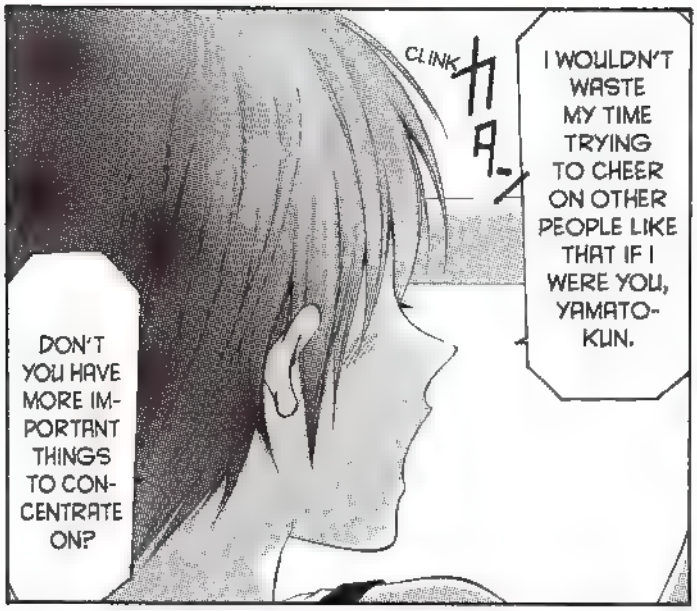

ALL RIGHT. THAT'S IT FOR TODAY!!
EVERY-BODY MAKE SURE TO DO A COOL DOWN BE-FORE YOU LEAVE!!
OKAY!!
CHATTER
CHATTER
HEY, LET'S GO TO MICKEY D'S!!
AHHH, ALL DONE.
AKITSUKI, WANNA GO GRAB A BITE WITH ME?
MY TREAT.

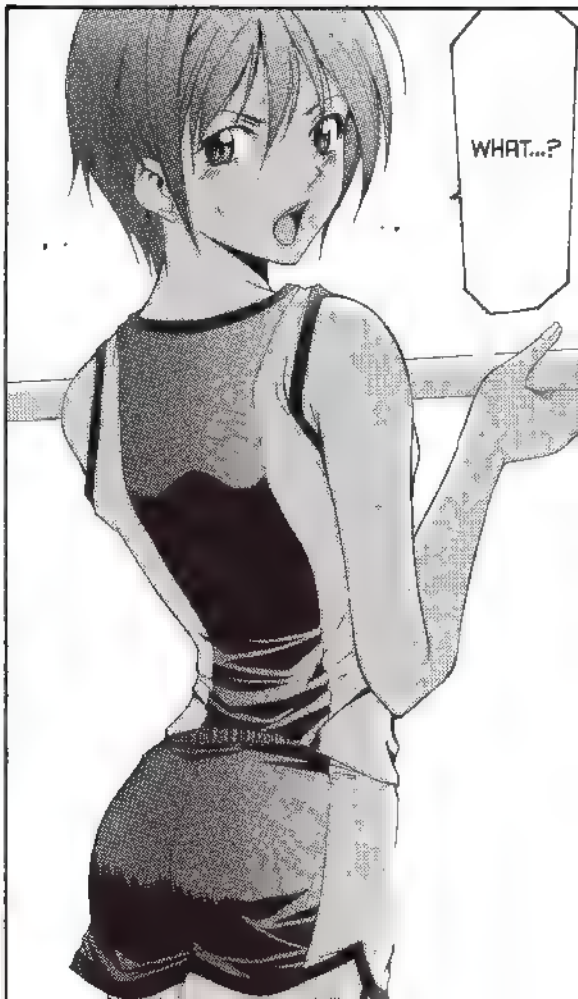

I'M GONNA PRACTICE A LITTLE BIT LONGER.
AH... SORRY.

DON'T WORRY!!
JUST DON'T OVERDO IT. I DON'T WANNA SEE YOU HURT YOURSELF.
WELL, WE'VE ONLY GOT THREE MORE DAYS TO GO T'LL THE TOUR-NAMENT, SO...
...OKAY.


ALL RIGHT... TIME TO GET STARTED!

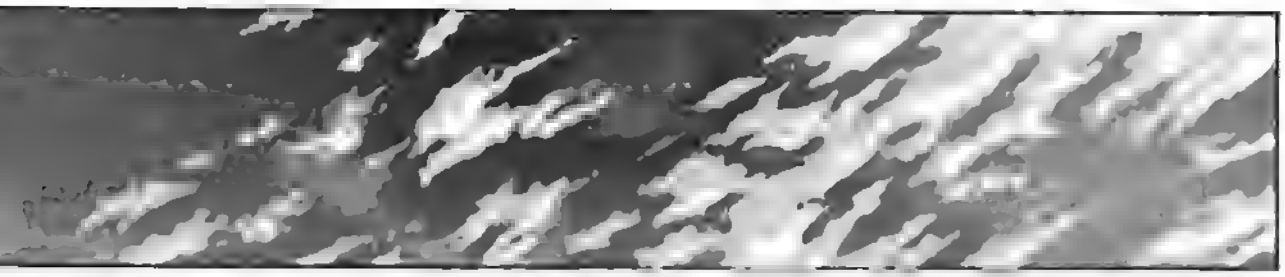

AH... ASAHINA, ARE YOU GONNA STAY LATE AND PRACTICE, TOO?
COOL! HANG IN THERE!

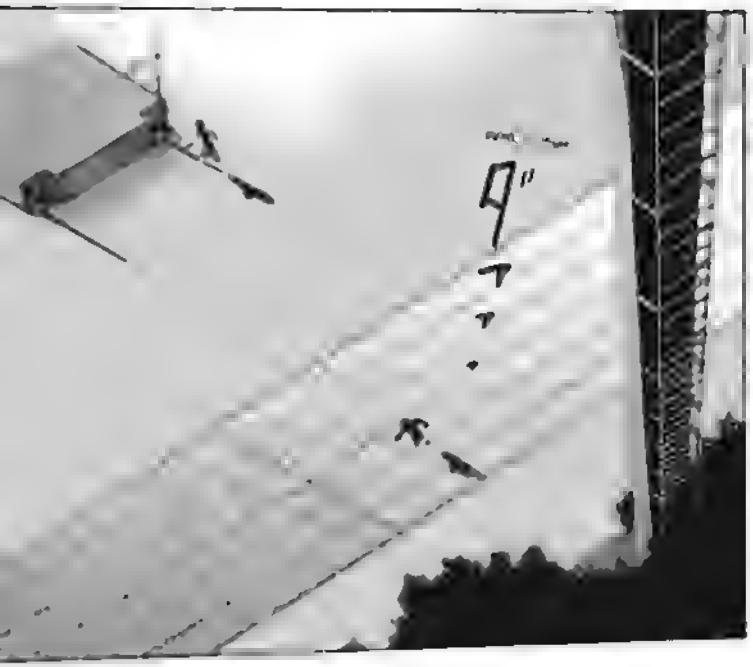

I WOULDN'T WASTE MY TIME TRYING TO CHEER ON OTHER PEOPLE LIKE THAT IF I WERE YOU, YAMATO-KUN.
CLINK
DON'T YOU HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONCENTRATE ON?


WHAT...?

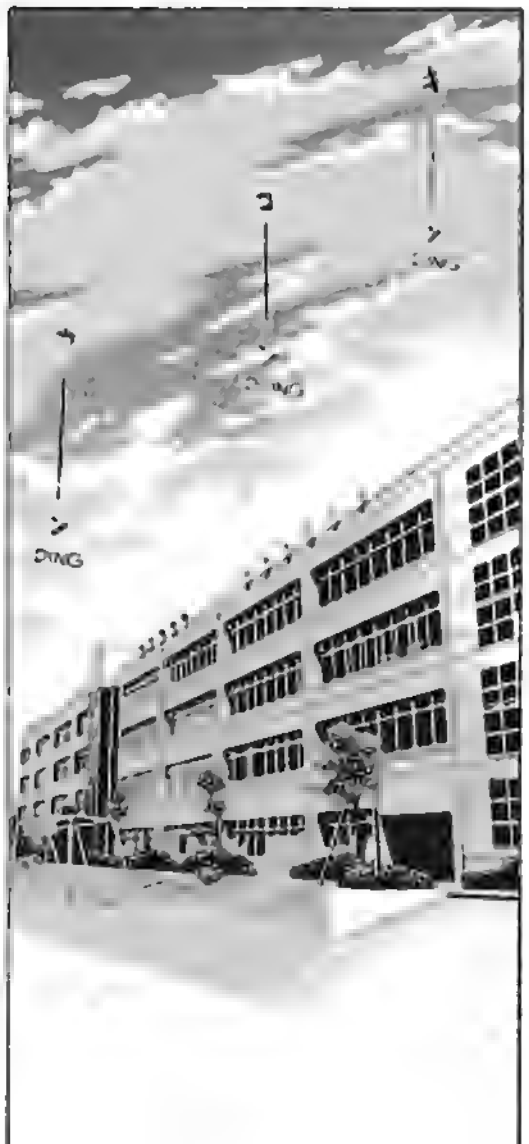
HUH...
.....

WHAT DID I DO...?
I DON'T GET HER AT ALL.
IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL YOU'RE GONNA FORGET EVERYTHING YOU'VE LEARNED. AND...
FALL RIGHT BACK INTO YOUR OLD RUNNING STYLE.



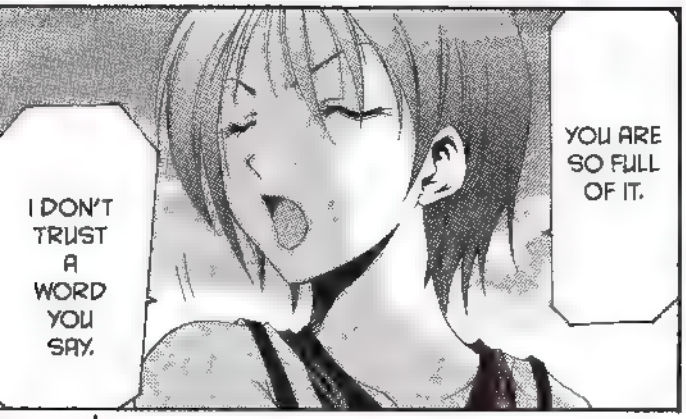

9"

GASP

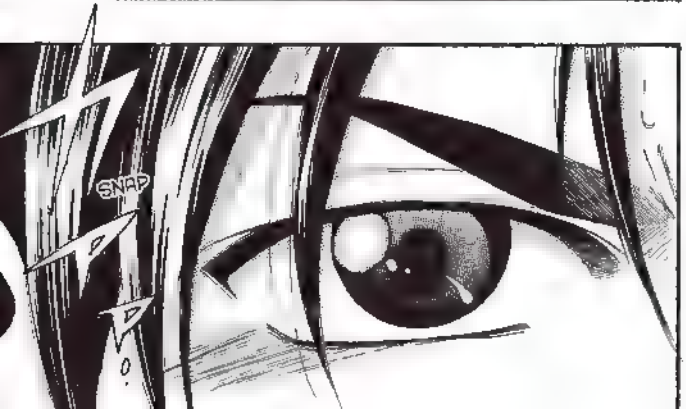

DING
DING

TADDA
I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN, AND SHE KEEPS SAYING STUFF LIKE THAT
SHIT, SHE REALLY PISSES ME OFF
I'M BETTER OFF NOT EVEN TALKING TO HER THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT SHE'LL SAY NEXT.
I'LL JUST DO MY OWN THING...
HEY!!

ASA-
HINA...
HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA BE HERE?
WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO HOME ALREADY?
UH... WH- WHAT IS IT?
WHAT...?
DON'T YOU KNOW ANY-THING?
IF YOU JUST KEEP RUNNING AND RUNNING LIKE THAT, YOU'RE GONNA END UP DOING MORE HARM THAN GOOD.

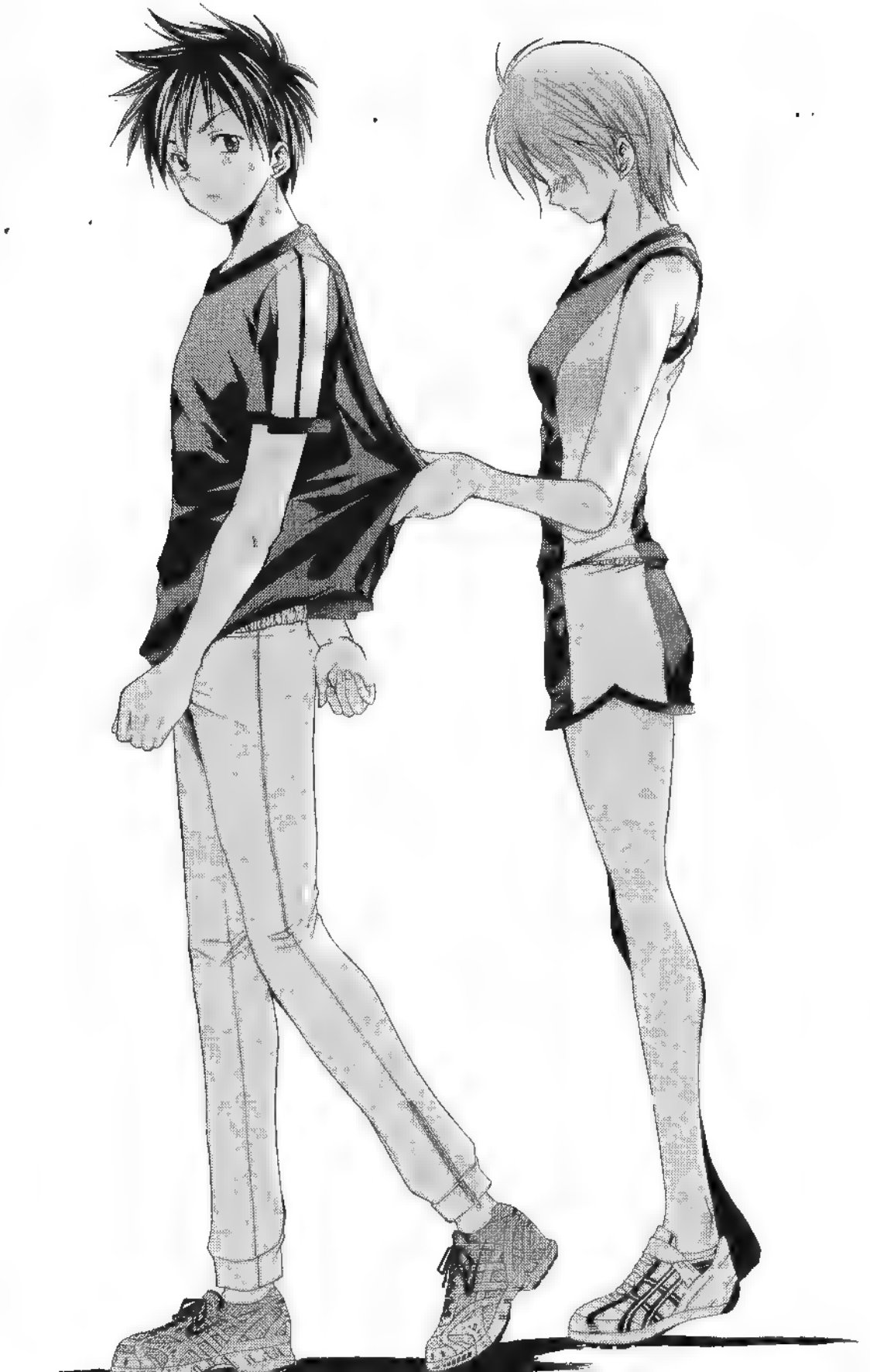

YOU ARE SO FULL OF IT.
I DON'T TRUST A WORD YOU SAY.

I-I'M BEING REALLY CAREFUL ABOUT MY RUNNING.
IS THAT SO?


SNAP
PD
D.

WHAT THE FUCK IS YOUR PROBLEM?
WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS BULLSHIT?
WHAT...

BUT YOU JUST CAN'T KEEP YOUR BIG MOUTH SHUT.
GRRP
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY I'VE BEEN TRYING SO HARD...
AH...
FUCK THIS! I'M GOING HOME
STOMP
W-WAIT A MINUTE!!
HEY...
STEP
UMM...
HEY!!



WHA*...?
JUST WAI* A SEC
.....

UH...
I'M SORRY... I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE LIKE THAT.

DON'T BE MAD.
SO PLEASE...

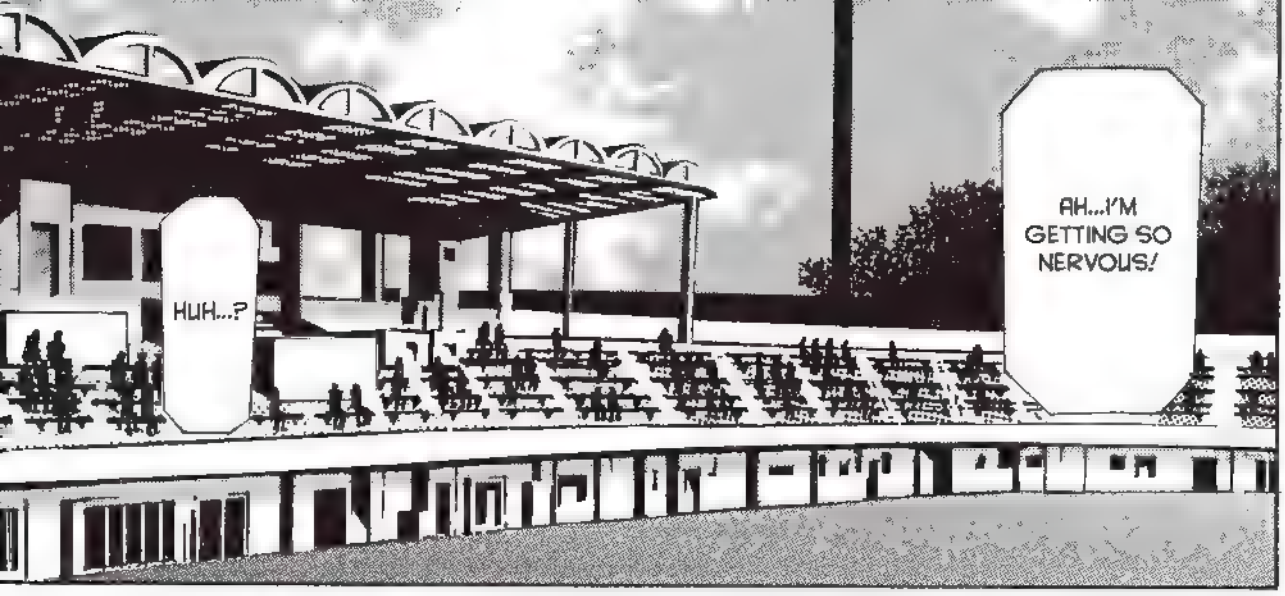
I'M NOT... REALLY...MAD OR ANYTHING...
AH...NO...

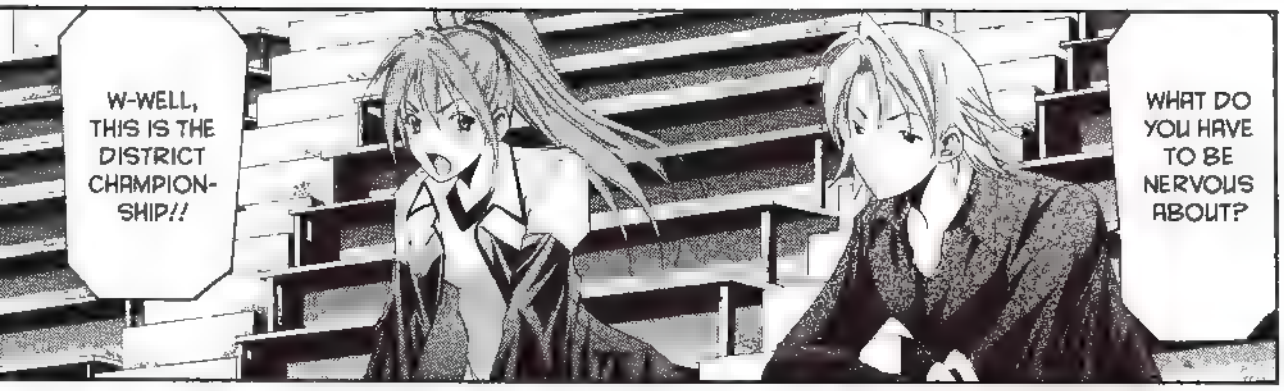
OH... GOOD
Y- YEAH
I'M FINE...
WELL, GOOD LUCK AT THE CHAMPION-SHIPS!!
AH...
HEY!!
.....

GOOD LUCK...?
I DON'T NEED LUCK.
I'M GONNA BE NUMBER ONE NO MATTER WHAT!!

2004
Tokyo
High
School
District
Championships

SUZUKA
ALL RIGHT!!
#65 Pitfall


HUH...?
AH...I'M GETTING SO NERVOUS!


W-WELL, THIS IS THE DISTRICT CHAMPION-SHIP!!
WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO BE NERVOUS ABOUT?

IF YOU'RE SO CURIOUS, WHY DON'T YOU...
...TRY COM-PETING YOUR-SELF?

I WONDER WHAT IT'S LIKE...
...TO BE RUNNING IN SUCH A BIG COMPETITION!

YOU'RE SO MEAN.
THAT'S WHY...
...GIRLS DIG ME SO MUCH.
YOU ARE SUCH AN IDIOT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S RUNNING IN SUCH A BIG RACE.
YAMATO'S REALLY MADE SOME PROGRESS.

AKIT-SUKI!!
ARE YOU ALL READY FOR THE RACE?
UH... YES.

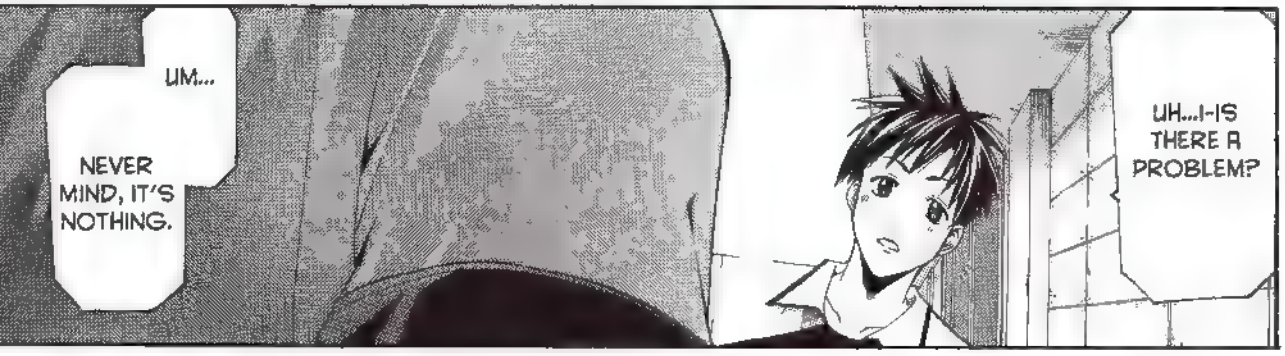
WELL...I WONDER...
...HOW HE'LL SCREW THINGS UP THIS TIME.

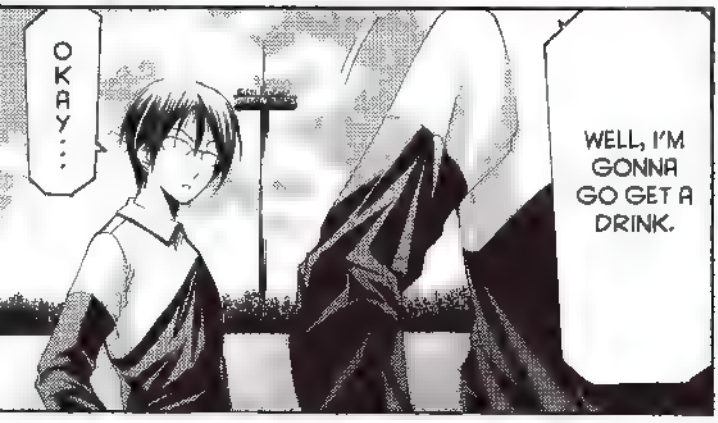
D-DON'T WORRY.
ARE YOU SURE? USUALLY, YOU FORGET SOME IMPORTANT DETAIL.

HUH...?
MUMBLE (ぼそ)
OKAY...
HOW BOR-ING...

ALL RIGHT.
I GUESS THAT'LL BE OKAY....

AH...I'M GONNA GO WITH THE ONE I'VE BEEN WORKING ON.
BY THE WAY, AKITSUKI... WHAT RUNNING STYLE ARE YOU GONNA USE TODAY?
136


UM...
NEVER MIND, IT'S NOTHING.
UH...I-IS THERE A PROBLEM?


OKAY...
WELL, I'M GONNA GO GET A DRINK.

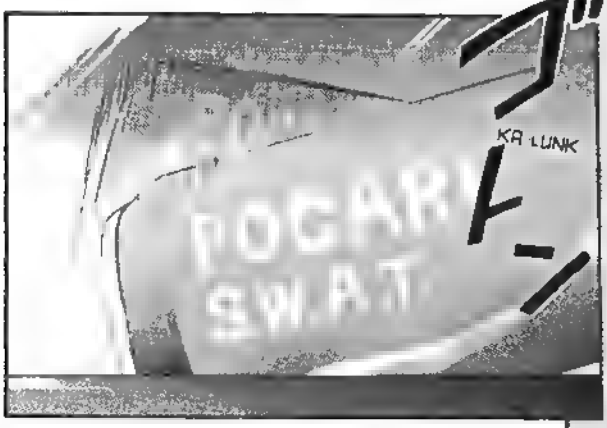
YOU'LL BE RUNNING THREE TIMES THIS WEEKEND, INCLUDING THE FINAL RACE.
JUST DON'T OVER-EXERT YOURSELF, ALL RIGHT?
I KNOW, I KNOW!

.....

I GET NERVOUS JUST THINKING ABOUT IT...
THESE ARE THE DISTRICT CHAMPION-SHIPS. THAT MEANS I'LL DEFINITELY BE RUNNING AGAINST ARIMA IN THE FINAL RACE.

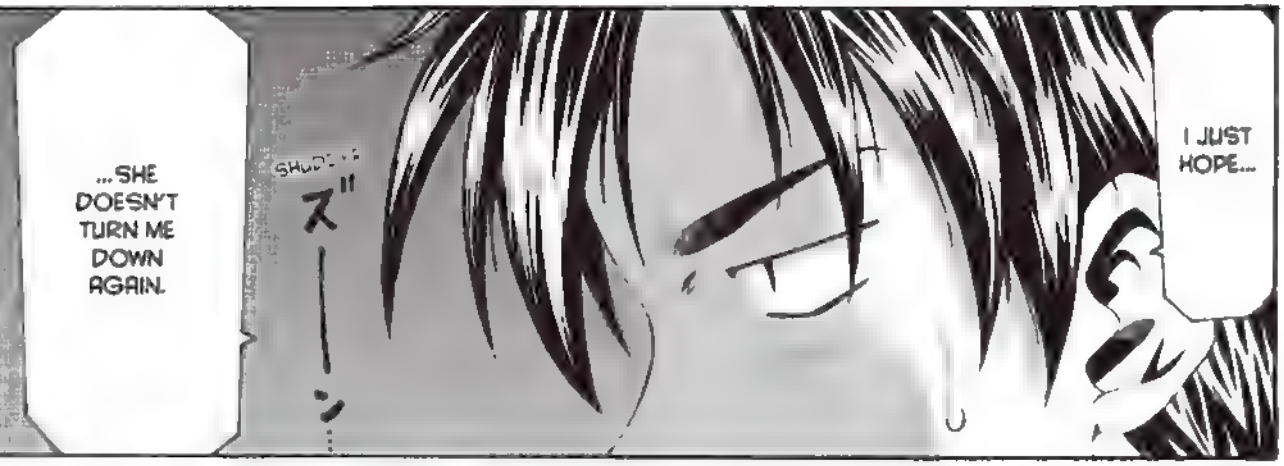
KIRIN
KIRIN

I'M GONNA BEAT HIM AND BECOME NUMBER ONE IN THE NATION!
N-NO! I CAN'T GIVE IN TO FEAR!!


KA-LUNK
POCARI
S.W.A.T.

.....

THEN I'LL MARCH RIGHT UP TO ASAHINA AND TELL HER HOW I REALLY FEEL.


I JUST HOPE...
ズーン
...SHE DOESN'T TURN ME DOWN AGAIN.

I'M SORRY... I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE LIKE THAT...
SO PLEASE... DON'T BE MAD.

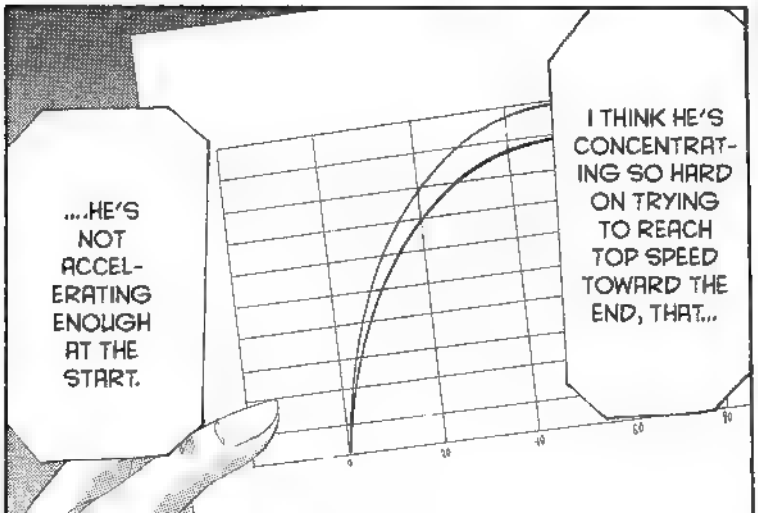
WELL, GOOD LUCK AT THE CHAMPION-SHIPS!!

.....
...THANKS.

ATTENTION PLEASE. THIS IS THE FINAL CALL FOR THE MEN'S 100-METER RACE//
ALL RUNNERS PLEASE COME TO THE TRACK IMMEDIATELY.
FOR SOME REASON, I JUST FEEL LIKE THINGS ARE GONNA WORK OUT THIS TIME.

...HE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO MEET OR BEAT HIS RECORD FROM THE LAST COMPETITION.
WELL, SINCE HE CHANGED HIS RUNNING STYLE...

YEAH. THE SPEED BAR IS PRETTY MUCH PERFECT, BUT...
THAT'S WEIRD.
THE GRAPH IS LOOKING GOOD, RIGHT?

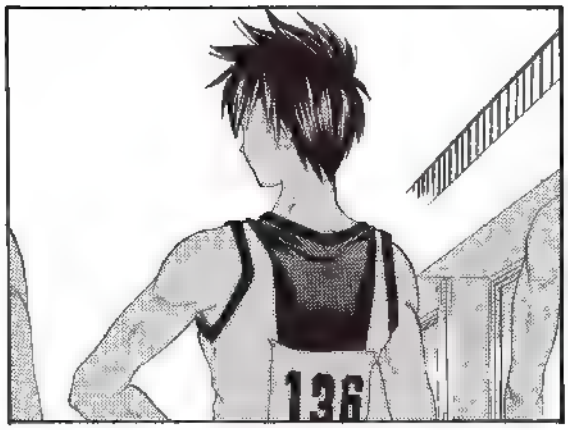

....HE'S NOT ACCELERATING ENOUGH AT THE START.
I THINK HE'S CONCENTRATING SO HARD ON TRYING TO REACH TOP SPEED TOWARD THE END, THAT...

HIS TIME IS GETTING WORSE?

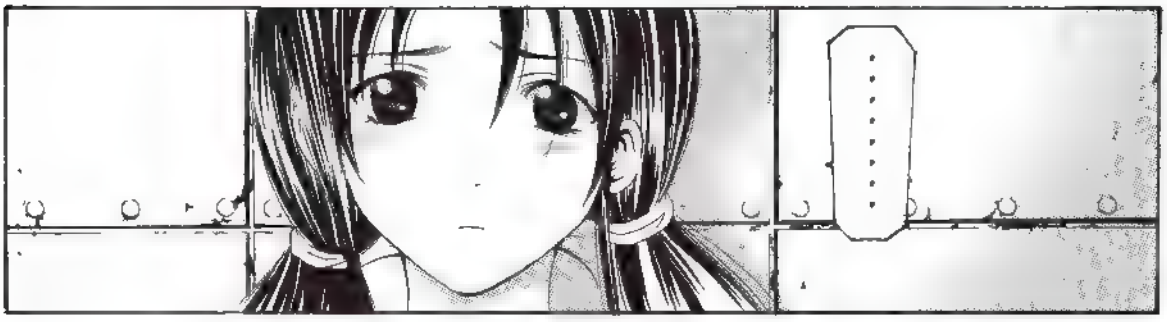
BUT HE'S THE TOTAL OPPOSITE.
THAT'S AN INTER-ESTING DILEMMA.
MOST PEOPLE TAKE TOO LONG TO REACH THEIR MAXIMUM VELOCITY.
BUT HE'LL NEVER MAKE IT TO THE TOP WITH THAT STYLE.
AKITSUKI COULD STICK TO HIS OLD STYLE AND STILL COMPETE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.
SO, IF HE'S REALLY IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL, IT'S WORTH IT FOR HIM...
HE HAS WHAT IT TAKES TO BE NUMBER ONE IN THE NATION.
.....
...TO CHANGE HIS STYLE, EVEN IF IT MEANS LOSING TO ARIMA THIS TIME.
AND HE SAID HE WANTS TO BE...

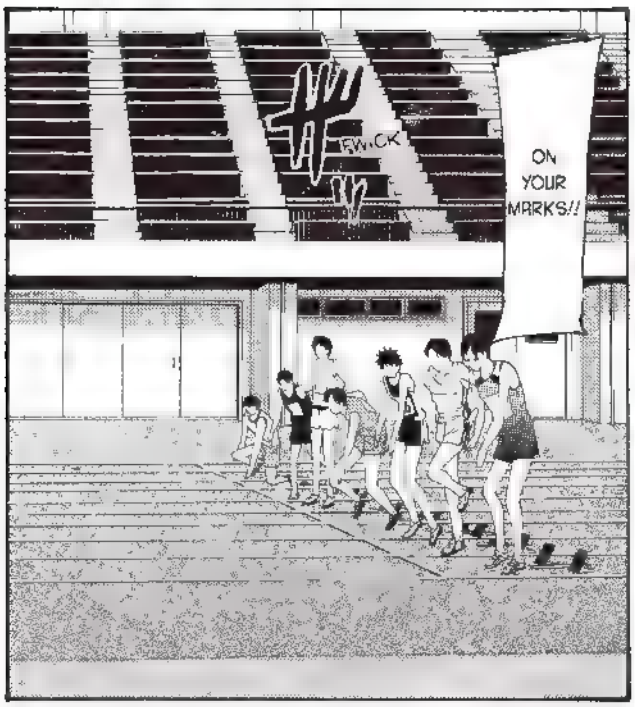
SLAP
NOW YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO SOUND LIKE A CAPTAIN, MIYAMOTO.
HEH, WELL...
I JUST HAVE THIS FEELING THAT...
...HE COULD BE...
NUMBER 1021, OKAJIMA-KUN!
HERE!!
NUM-BER 4129, TAKA-HASHI-KUN!
RIGHT HERE!
...EVEN BETTER THAN KAZUKI TSUDA.
YOU'RE IN GROUP NUMBER ONE AGAIN, HUH?
TRY NOT TO FALL THIS TIME.
I KNOW!
136
136

STEP
STEP
LET'S GET THIS STARTED!
GROUP NUMBER ONE, PLEASE LINE UP!!
GOTTEN ANY BETTER IN THESE LAST TWO WEEKS?
HUH, LITTLE AKITSUKI-KUN?
YOU JUST WAIT AND SEE...!
HUH...


136

OH MY GOD. I'M SO NER-VOUS!!
AH! LOOK'S LIKE YAMATO'S UP NEXT.




SWICK
ON YOUR MARKS!!

I DID EV-ERYTHING I COULD TO GET READY FOR THIS...
NOW I JUST HAVE TO GIVE IT ALL I'VE GOT!
GET SET!!
I AM GOING TO BE NUMBER ONE, NO MATTER WHAT...
CLICK
NITSHI

I'M GONNA TELL ASAHINA HOW I FEEL ALL OVER AGAIN!!
136
BANG
ALL RIGHT...
HE'S OFF TO A GOOD START.
NOW COMES THE REAL TEST.
H-HEY, HE'S LETTING EVERY-BODY CATCH UP!!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING, AKIT-SUKI?
WHOOSH

...IF HE'S ON HIS WAY TO BEATING ARIMA...
WE'LL SEE...
NOT YET...!
NOT YET...
STILL GOTTA KEEP MY SPEED DOWN...
136

AND THE WINNER OF THE MEN'S 100-METER DASH IS...
WOO
WOO
910
EMERSON ARIMA!!

WOO
.....
WOO
WELL...
THESE THINGS HAPPEN.
YEAH...
WOO

MEN'S TRACK

MEN 100-METER FINAL GROUP NUMBER ONE

NAME	GRADE	DIVISION	LANE	RANKING	TIME
TOMOFUMI MATSUOKA	SOPHO-MORE	1	2	First place	11.04 seconds
HIRONORI MIYAZAKI	SOPHO-MORE	6	4	Second place	11.45 seconds
TETSUSHI GOMI	SOPHO-MORE	2	6	Third place	11.51 seconds
YAMATO AKITSUKI	FRESH-MAN	3	3	Fourth place	11.70 seconds
	FRESH-MAN	5	1	Fifth place	11.99 seconds
	SOPHO-MORE	1	5	Sixth place	12.01 seconds

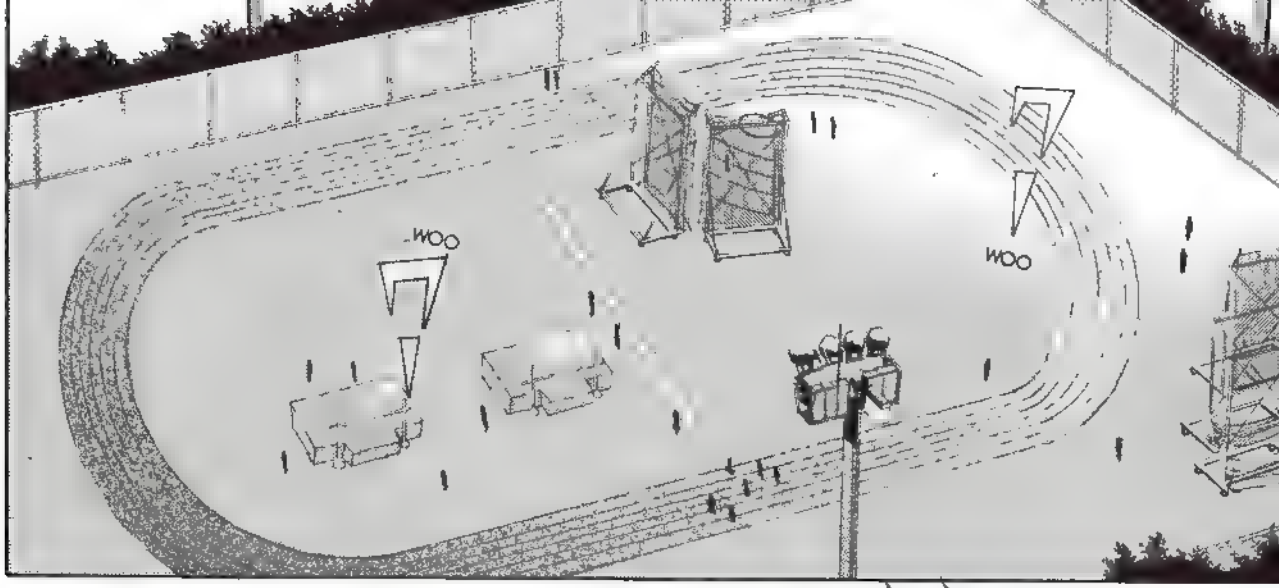
BUT...

I'M JUST SURPRISED THAT AKITSUKI FINISHED MORE THAN A SECOND SHORT OF HIS BEST TIME...

AND I CAN'T BELIEVE HE DIDN'T EVEN QUALIFY.

#66 Miscalculation

SUZUKA

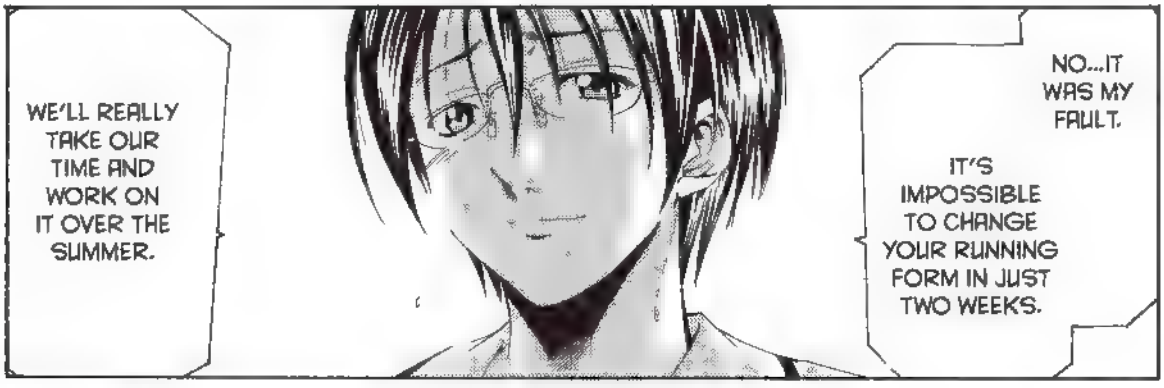

WOO
WOO

AKIT-
SUKI...
STEP
STEP

A-ABOUT
YESTER-
DAY'S
RACE...
YOU
KNOW...

WHAT...?
I'M
SORRY...

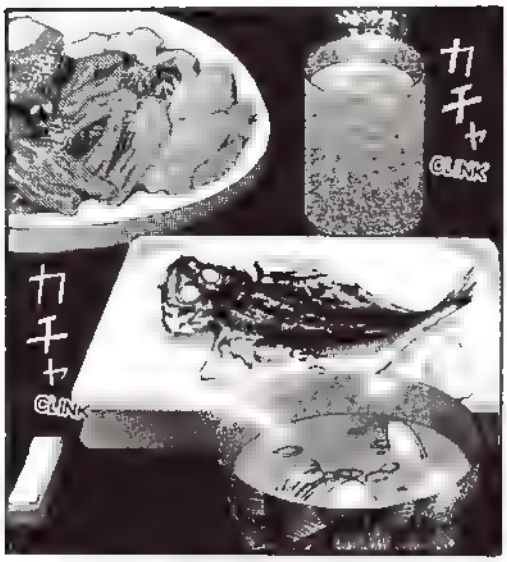
I KNEW THAT EVERYBODY WAS CATCHING UP WITH ME, BUT I JUST COULDN'T GET MY SPEED UP.
MY MIND JUST WENT TOTALLY BLANK WHEN I WAS RUNNING.


WE'LL REALLY TAKE OUR TIME AND WORK ON IT OVER THE SUMMER.
NO...IT WAS MY FAULT.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CHANGE YOUR RUNNING FORM IN JUST TWO WEEKS.

HE'S PROBABLY TOO BUSY GETTING READY FOR THE 200-METER FINAL.
HE'S NOT THE TYPE TO DWELL ON STUFF LIKE THAT.

IT'D BE OKAY IF IT WERE JUST THE 100-METER DASH, BUT...
...IT HAPPENED IN THE RELAY, TOO...
I GOT A LATE START, AND THEN I DROPPED THE BATON... SASAKI-SENPAI MUST BE PISSED.

THANKS.
SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST FORGET ABOUT IT, AND START THINKING ABOUT WHAT'S NEXT.


カチャ
CLINK
カチャ
CLINK

ASAHIYU BATHS

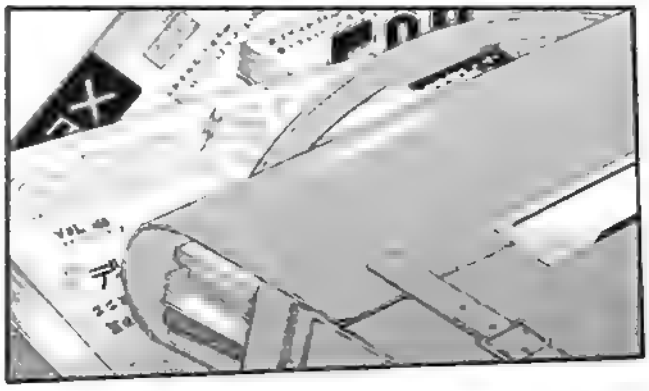
I WENT TO GET HIM, BUT HE SAID HE DIDN'T NEED DINNER.
MIHO, WILL YOU GO GET YAMATO-KUN? I CAN'T CLEAR THE TABLE TILL HE EATS.

SLURP
.....

HE DIDN'T WANT DINNER? ...BUT HE HARDLY ATE ANYTHING THIS MORNING.
IS HE OKAY...?

I GUESS HE'S TAKING YESTER-DAY'S LOSS PRETTY HARD.
HE WAS REALLY GIVING IT HIS ALL...

WHAT?
OH... SURE, OF COURSE.
CLANK
カチャ
THANKS FOR DINNER.
コト
CLINK
OKAY...
YOU CAN JUST LEAVE THE DISHES THERE.
YEAH, THEY MUST BE FIGHTING AGAIN OR SOMETHING.
RIGHT? GORO-CHAN.
SUZUKA'S ACTING KINDA WEIRD, TOO.
10
MEOW
バタン
SLAM



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YAMATO AKITSUKI

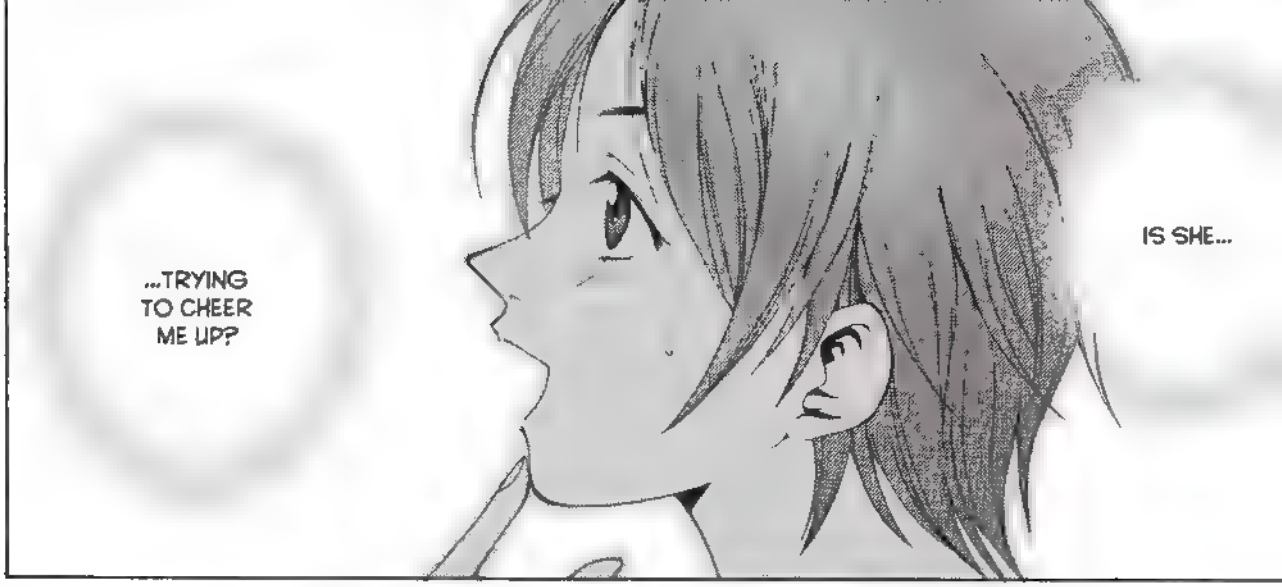
GOOD LUCK AT THE CHAMPIONSHIPS!!
WELL...
PATHETIC! PATHETIC! I AM SO FUCKING PATHETIC!
FLAPPA
FLAPPA
AHHH!
GODAM-MIT!!
PWUMP
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN TELL HER HOW I FEEL. NOW. I'M TOO ASHAMED TO EVEN LOOK HER IN THE EYE.
AFTER SHE GAVE ME ALL THAT ENCOUR-AGEMENT!
SHE'S PROBABLY TOTALLY DIS-APPOINTED IN ME.
WHO THE HELL COULD THAT BE...
WHAT?
CLICK
...HUH?
DING DONG

A-ASAHINA!
WHAT IS IT...!?
CAN I COME IN?
HUH!? UH, UMM... MY ROOM'S KINDA MESSY..
THAT'S OKAY, I JUST WANNA USE YOUR KITCHEN FOR A SECOND.
MY KITCHEN?
FOR THIS.
RUSTLE

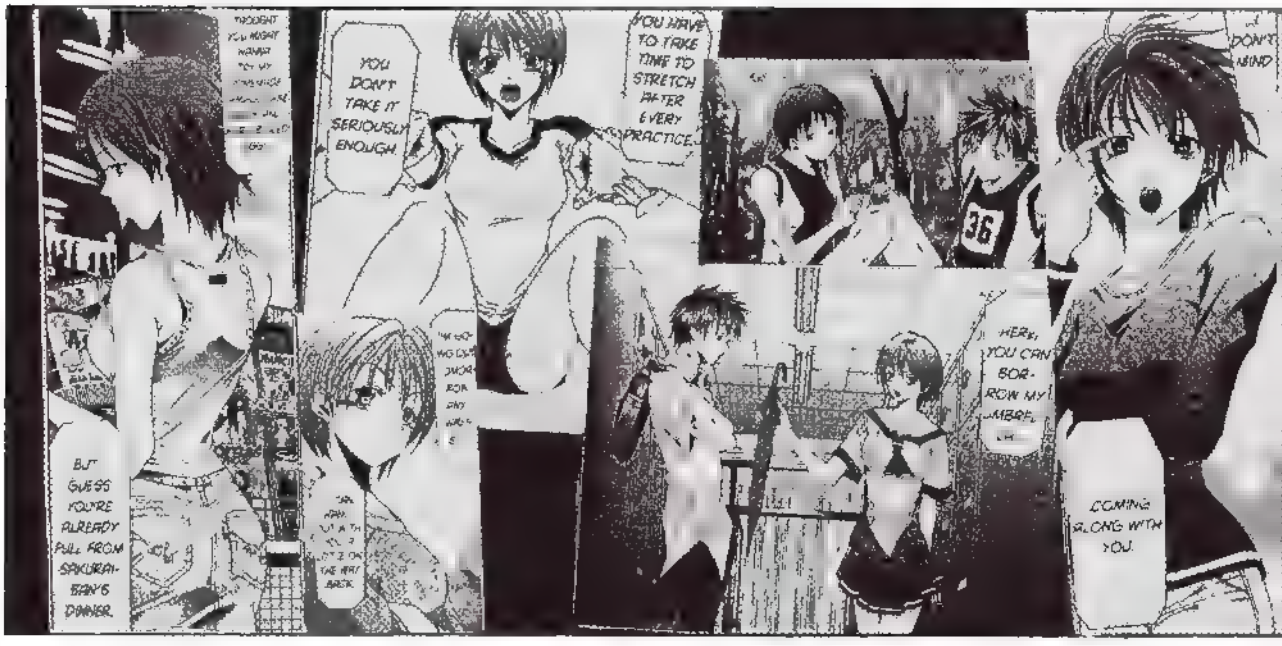
I GOT THESE EGGS ON SALE AT THE STORE, BUT I CAN'T EAT THEM ALL ON MY OWN.
I'M GONNA MAKE A DOZEN HARD-BOILED EGGS. YOU CAN HAVE HALF OF THEM, YAMATO-KUN.
WHY ARE YOU GONNA BOIL ALL OF 'EM?
BECAUSE, THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I KNOW HOW TO MAKE EGGS.
WELL, WHY DON'T YOU JUST DO IT IN YOUR ROOM?
NO WAY. I'M TRYING TO SAVE MONEY ON MY GAS BILL.
WHAT'S WITH ALL THESE DIRTY DISHES? GEEZ, GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER.
AH... SORRY...
UM...I... DON'T HAVE A MICRO-WAVE, YOU KNOW...?
CLINK
I KNOW HOW TO MAKE HARD-BOILED EGGS.
WHAT DID I DO WRONG THIS TIME...?
カチャ
CLINK
カチャ
CLINK

.....
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
TSSSHHHH
U-UH...
QUIT STANDING AROUND.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST SIT DOWN?
WHAT!? UH, YEAH, IT'S ON THE TOP SHELF.
HEY, YOU GOT ANY SALT?
SUD-DENLY SHE JUST HAS TO MAKE HARD-BOILED EGGS...?
WHAT THE HELL IS SHE DOING HERE?

HUH?
YOU KNOW WHAT...
I NEVER UNDERSTOOD HER ANYWAY.
WELL, WHATEVER...
I ALWAYS FELT LIKE I WAS UNDER TONS OF PRESSURE, AND I'D LET ALL THESE LITTLE THINGS GET TO ME.
AFTER I STARTED TRACK, IT TOOK ME THREE YEARS BEFORE I EVEN QUALIFIED FOR THE PREFECTURAL TOURNAMENT.
カチッ
SNAP
I MADE IT TO THE NATIONALS. THERE WERE EVEN SOME HIGH SCHOOL TRACK SCOUTS THERE JUST TO SEE ME.
BUT I DIDN'T GIVE UP. I KEPT PRACTICING, AND AT THE BIG TOURNAMENT, DURING MY LAST YEAR OF JUNIOR HIGH, I SET A RECORD, AND...
WH-WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS ALL OF A SUDDEN?
S-SHUT UP. I WAS JUST REMEMBERING STUFF... GEEZ...
.....
I GUESS I WAS PRETTY GOOD...


...TRYING TO CHEER ME UP?
IS SHE...

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, WHENEVER SOMETHING BAD HAPPENS TO ME...
.....


I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANNA TRY MY
YOU DON'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY ENOUGH.
YOU HAVE TO TAKE TIME TO STRETCH AFTER EVERY PRACTICE.
DON'T MIND
36
HERE, YOU CAN BORROW MY
BUT GUESS YOU'RE ALREADY FULL FROM SAKURAI-SAN'S DINNER.
COMING ALONG WITH YOU.

W-WHAT...?

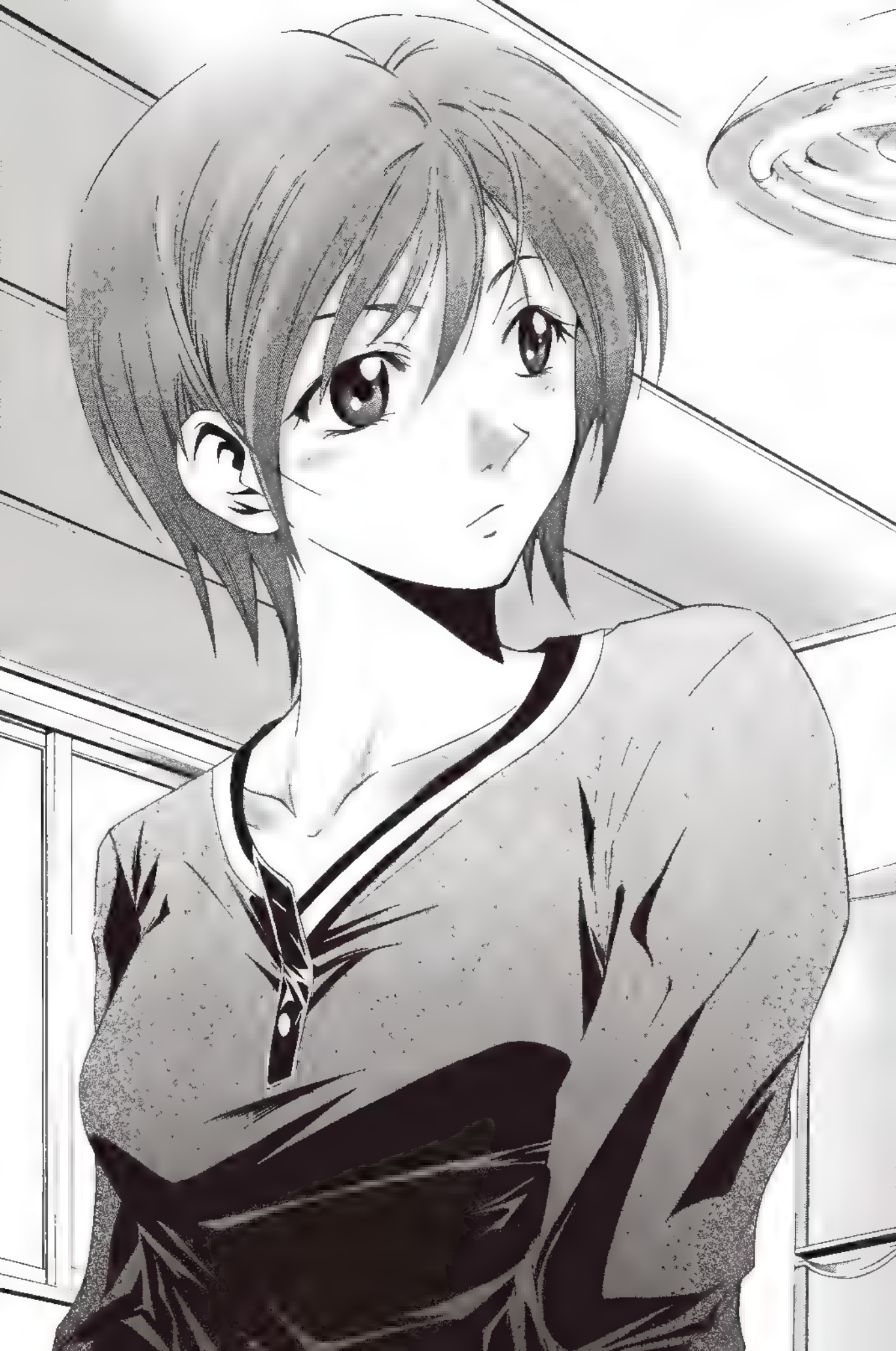
.....

TH-THAT'S NOT WHY I'M HERE.
BLUSH
WHAT!?
N-NOTH-ING.
THANKS... ...FOR COMING OVER TO CHEER ME UP.
YOU'RE RIGHT...
SHE'S ALWAYS LIKE THIS.
I TOLD YOU THAT I HAD SOME EXTRA EGGS, THAT'S ALL.
DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA.
I-I'M NOT G-GRIN-NING.
HEY... WHAT'RE YOU GRIN-NING ABOUT?
AH... OKAY
TCH...

THUMP THUMP
YOU ARE SUCH A WEIRDO.
THERE'S NO DENYING IT. I...

AH...!
CLOPPA
CLOPPA
WELL, I'M GOING BACK TO MY ROOM.
JUST TURN OFF THE STOVE WHEN THEY'RE READY.
I'M STILL IN LOVE WITH...
CLICK
.....

I'M STILL IN LOVE WITH YOU, ASAHINA!



WHAT...
I WAS PLANNING TO TELL YOU THAT...
IF I WON THE TOURNAMENT YESTERDAY...
BLOOP
BLOOP
BLOOP

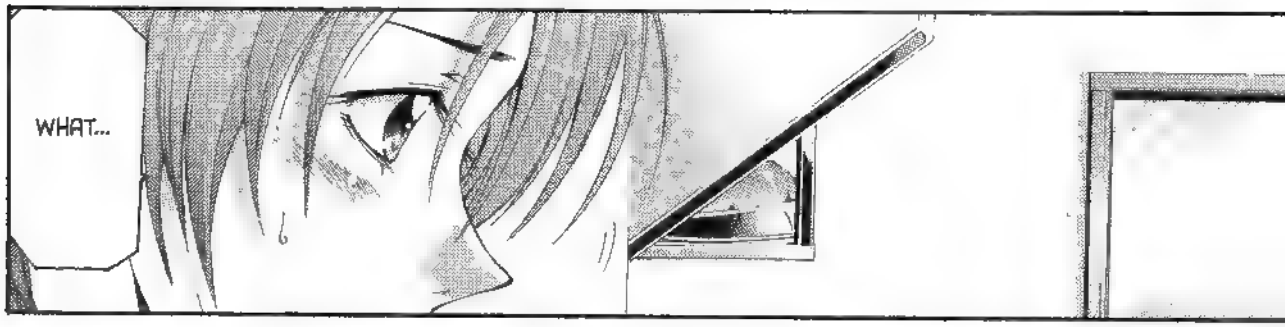
WELL, I'M GOING BACK TO MY ROOM
JUST TURN OFF THE STOVE WHEN THEY'RE READY
I-I'M STILL IN LOVE WITH..
CLICK
.....

SUZUKA

#67 Disappearance

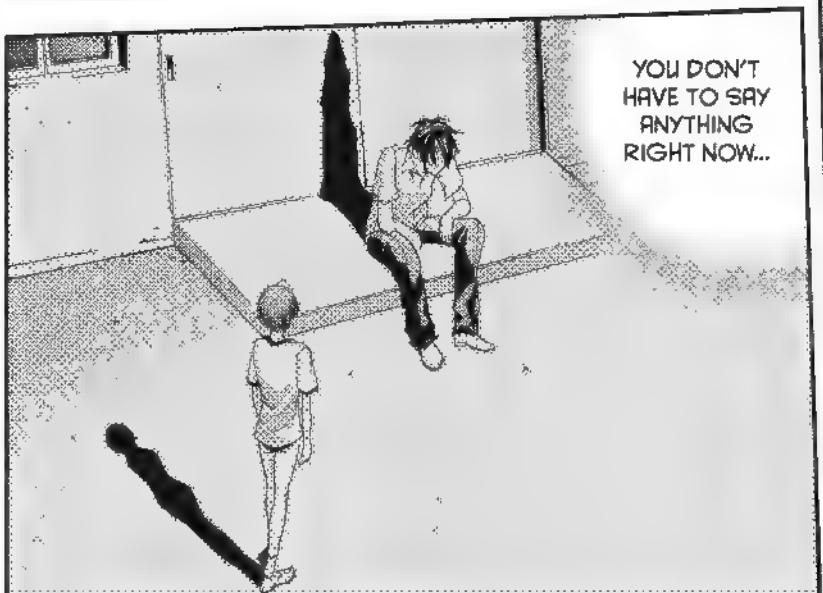
WHO?
ARE PLANNING TO BLOW YOU UP.
I SAW IN THE TOURNAMENT YESTERDAY.
7"
WHO?
WHAT ARE YOU?
LOOK

YOU DON'T NEED TO GIVE ME AN ANSWER RIGHT AWAY OR ANYTHING...


WHAT...

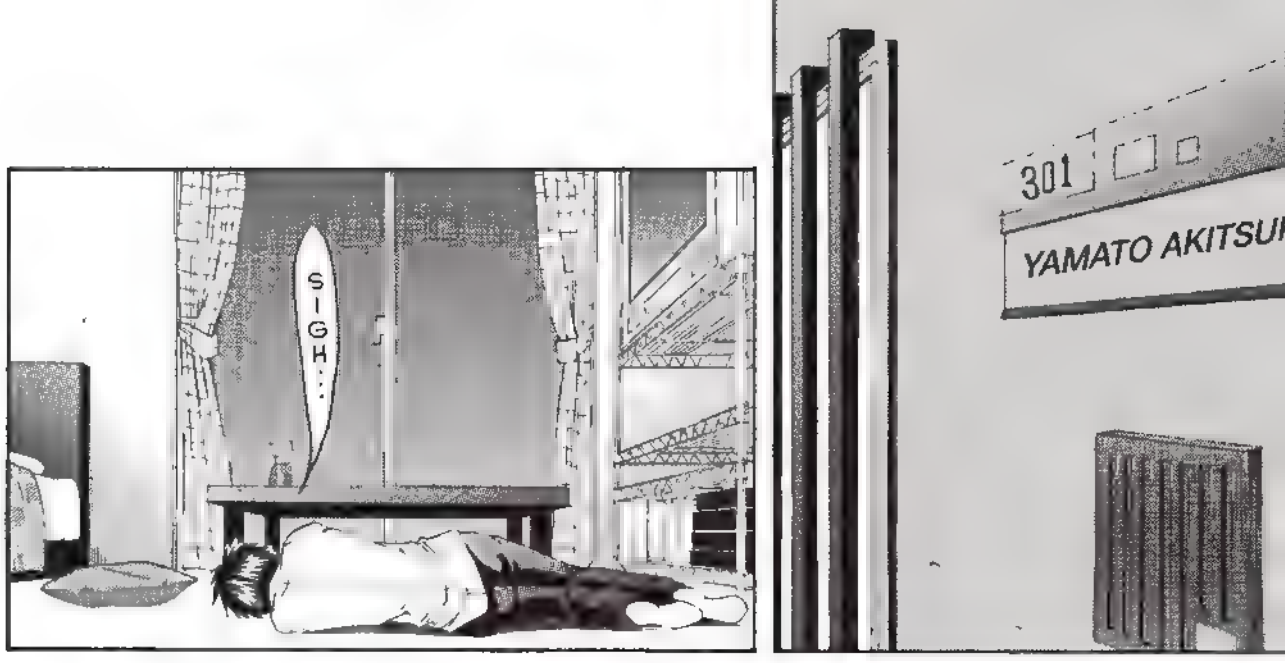
ズキン…
THUMP THUMP

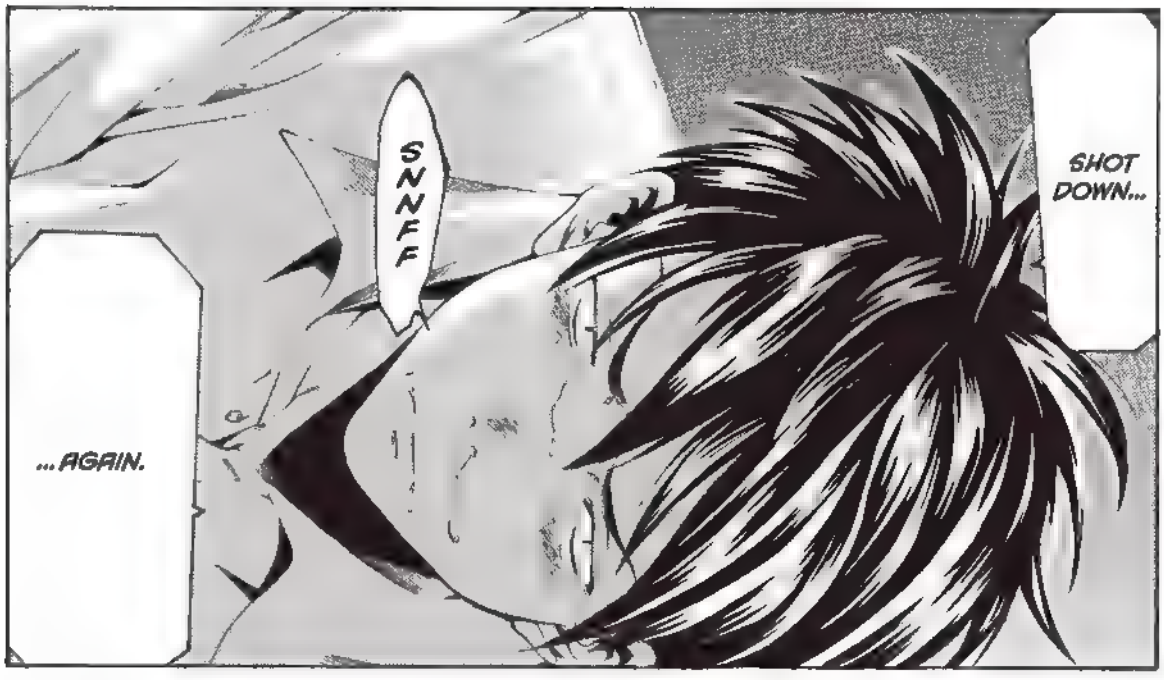
I...I'M GONNA KEEP TRAINING AND GET WAY FASTER THAN I AM NOW.
SO...

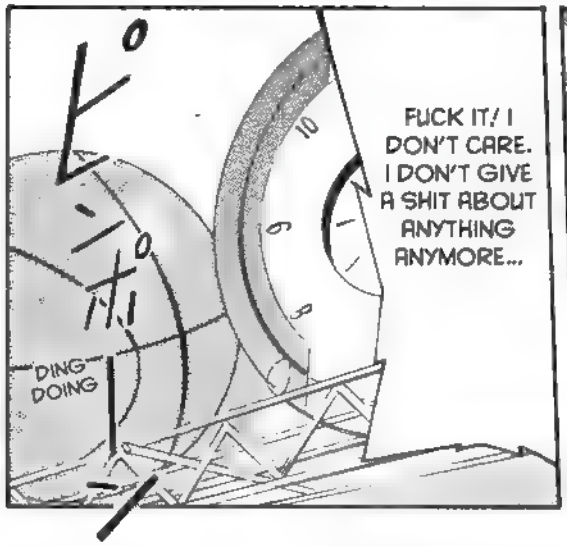

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING RIGHT NOW...

...I BECOME NUMBER ONE IN THE NATION, THEN...
AFTER...
...THEN YOU CAN—
WHEN I WIN THE NEXT CHAMPIONSHIP...
SHIVER
THEN YOU CAN TELL ME HOW YOU FEEL...

SHUT UP!!

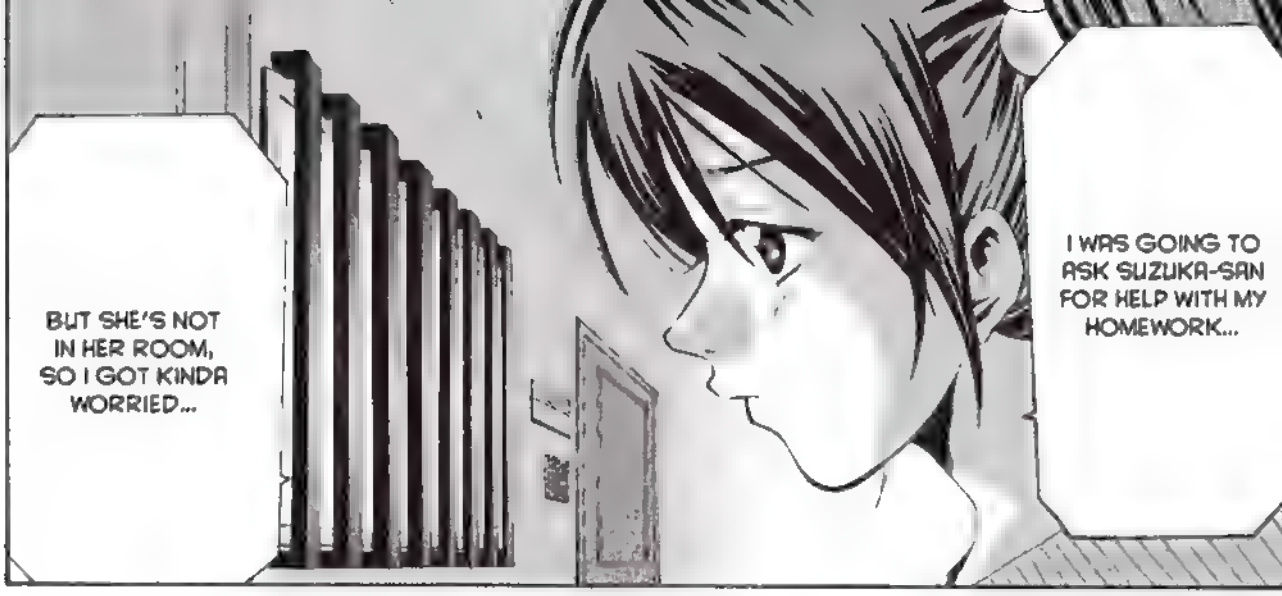

SIGH...
301
YAMATO AKITSU


SNNFF
SHOT DOWN...
...AGAIN.

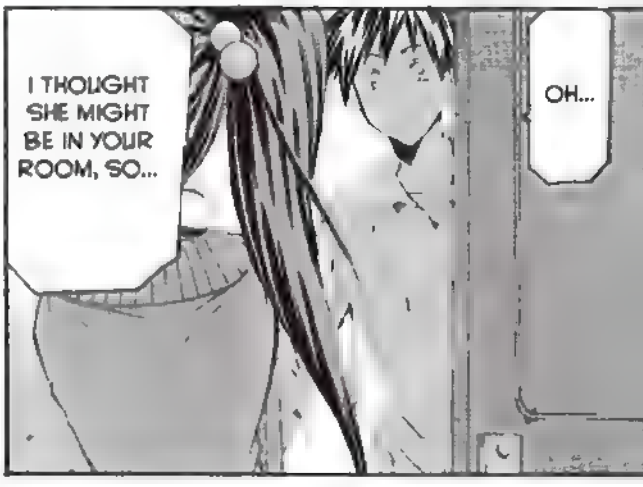

ピーポー
DING-DOING
FUCK IT! I DON'T CARE. I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT ANYTHING ANYMORE...

うおぉぉん
WAHHHHHH
AND THIS TIME SHE EVEN TOLD ME TO SHUT UP—!!!
NOT, "SORRY, BUT..." NOT "I'M FLATTERED, BUT..." JUST "SHUT UP"!

. . . . !!
C-COULD THAT BE ASAKINA..?
FWUP
MIKO-CHAN.
Y-YES!!
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOUR EYES ARE RED...
I-I WAS JUST SLEEPING, THAT'S ALL!!
WHAT IS IT!?


I WAS GOING TO ASK SUZUKA-SAN FOR HELP WITH MY HOMEWORK...
BUT SHE'S NOT IN HER ROOM, SO I GOT KINDA WORRIED...

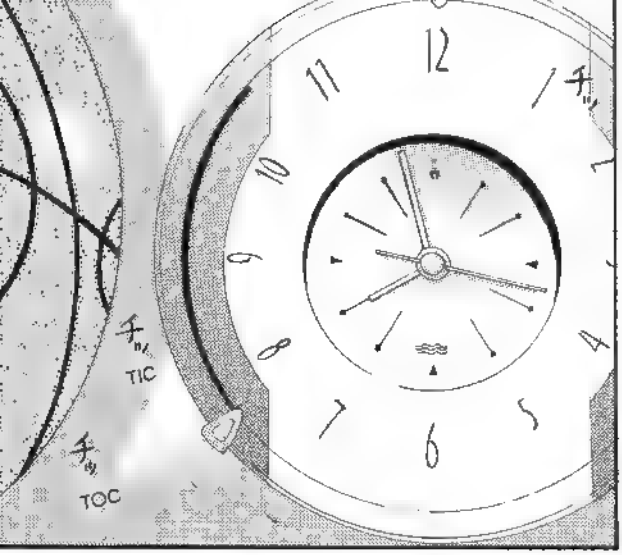
N-NO... SHE'S NOT HERE...
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I HAVEN'T HEARD HER DOOR OPEN OR CLOSE SINCE SHE LEFT HERE.

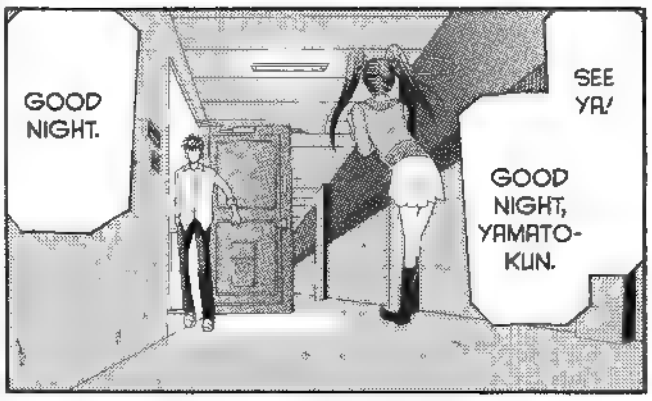

OH...
I THOUGHT SHE MIGHT BE IN YOUR ROOM, SO...

GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
SHE'S NOT A LITTLE KID.

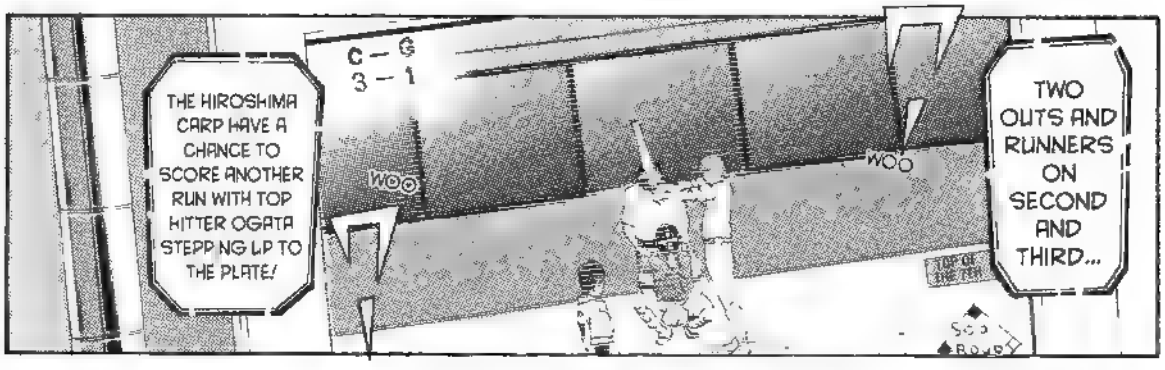
S-SHE PROBABLY WENT SHOPPING OR SOMETHING.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
OKAY.

302
SUZUKA ASAHINA
D-DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
SORRY I WOKE YOU UP..
OKAY, I'LL GO ASK MEGUMI-SAN TO HELP ME INSTEAD!


TIC
TOC

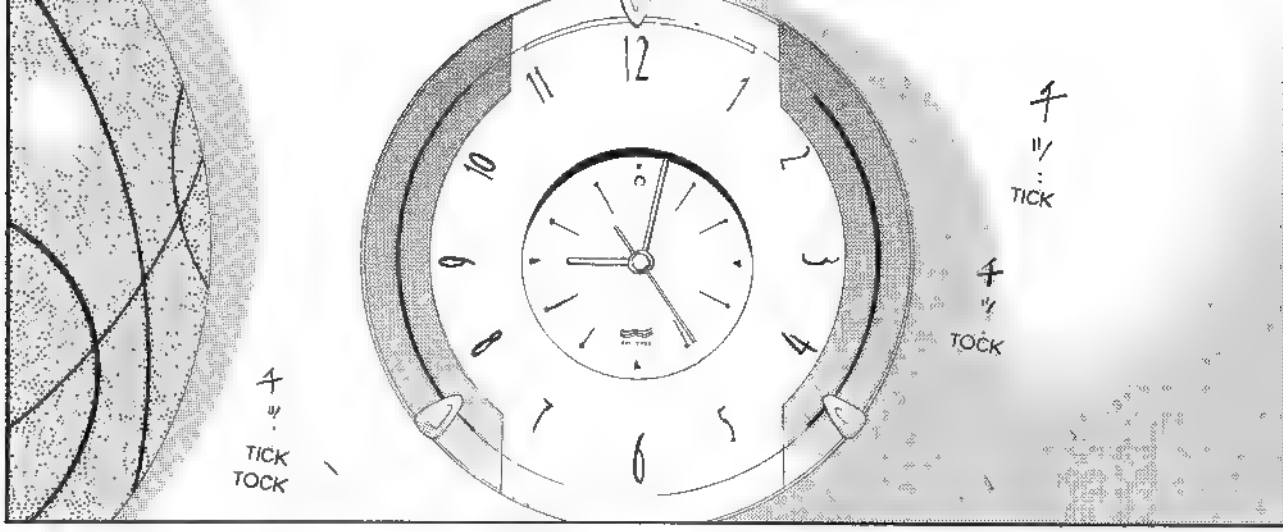

GOOD NIGHT.
SEE YA!
GOOD NIGHT, YAMATO-KUN.

IF SHE'D JUST GONE OUT SHOPPING, SHE'D BE BACK BY NOW...
IT'S BEEN AN HOUR SINCE SHE LEFT...

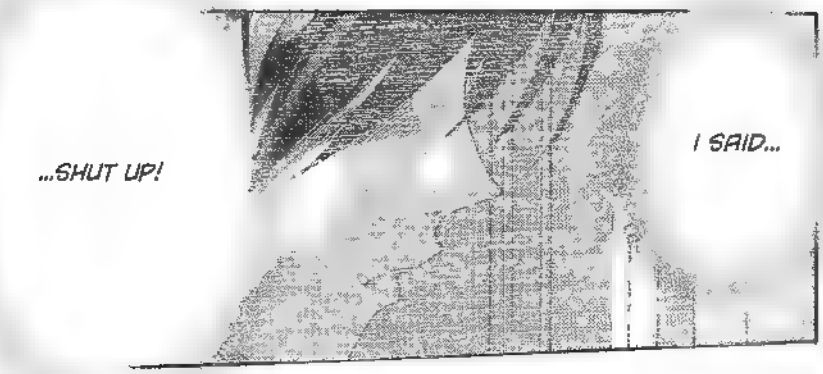

C — G
3 — 1
THE HIROSHIMA CARP HAVE A CHANCE TO SCORE ANOTHER RUN WITH TOP HITTER OGATA STEPP NG UP TO THE PLATE!
WOO
WOO
TOP OF THE 7TH
TWO OUTS AND RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD...

IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM...
ASAHIYU BATHS

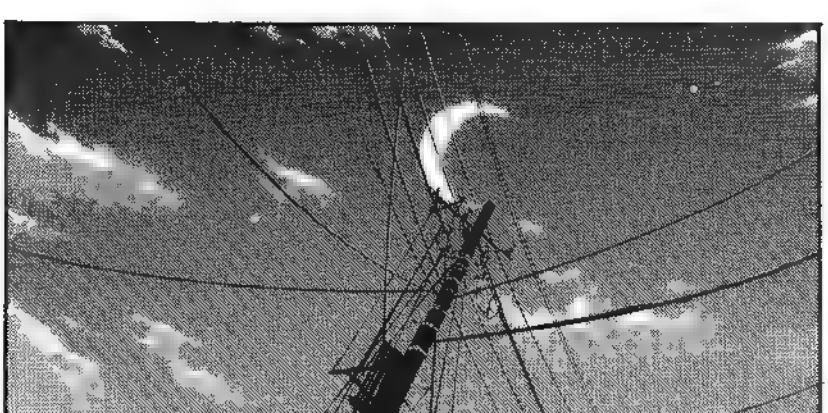
.....


TICK
TOCK
TICK
TOCK

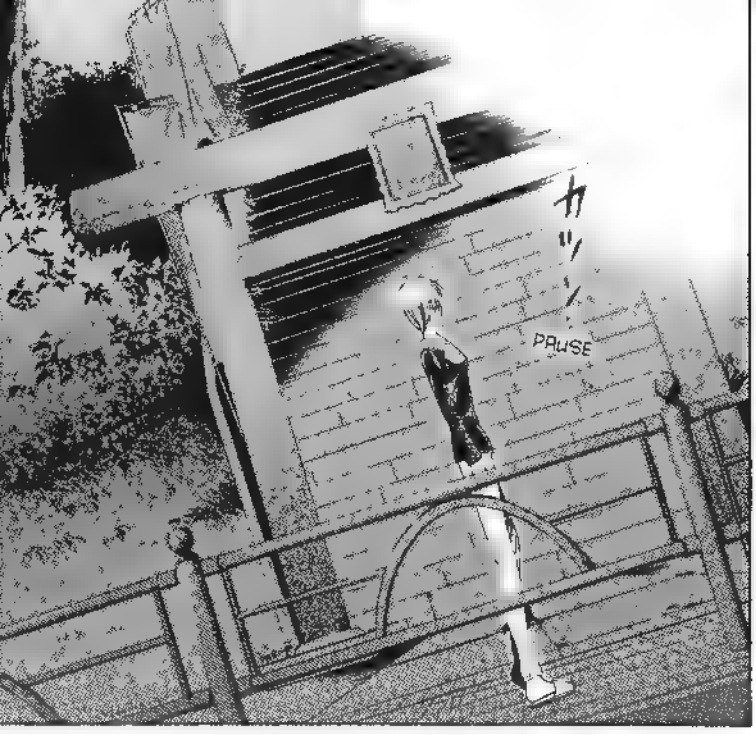
SQUIRM
SQUIRM


...SHUT UP!
I SAID...

IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE OF WHAT I SAID...



SOME-THING'S NOT RIGHT!! IT'S ALREADY NINE O'CLOCK!
FWUP
WHAT THE HELL IS ASAHINA DOING!?


PAUSE

STEP
STEP

SUZUKA?

STEP
STEP
SHE LEFT HER APARTMENT AND SHE STILL HASN'T COME BACK. IT'S BEEN TWO WHOLE HOURS. SHE'S NOT ANSWERING HER CELL PHONE E THER...
I THOUGHT SHE MIGHT BE AT YOUR PLACE...

WHAT? ARE YOU GUYS FIGHTING AGAIN?
N-NO...

NOPE. SHE'S NOT HERE...
IS SOME-THING WRONG?

FINE..
I'LL GO LOOK FOR HER, TOO.

AH... WAIT!
WELL, NEVER MIND... I'M JUST GOING TO LOOK FOR HER A BIT AROUND HERE.
TALK TO YOU LATER!!

OUR CHANCES OF FINDING HER ARE BETTER IF WE BOTH LOOK, RIGHT?
OH...BUT...

OKAY, THANKS.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. I'LL CALL YOU IF I FIND HER.

SHIT...I JUST TOOK A BATH AND NOW I'M GONNA GET ALL SWEATY AGAIN.
S-SORRY... I'LL BUY YOU DINNER

.....
HMMPH!

SHIT, WHAT THE HELL IS SHE THINKING!?
ALL I DID WAS TELL HER HOW I FELT ABOUT HER. WHY DID SHE HAVE TO GO RUNNING OFF LIKE THAT?

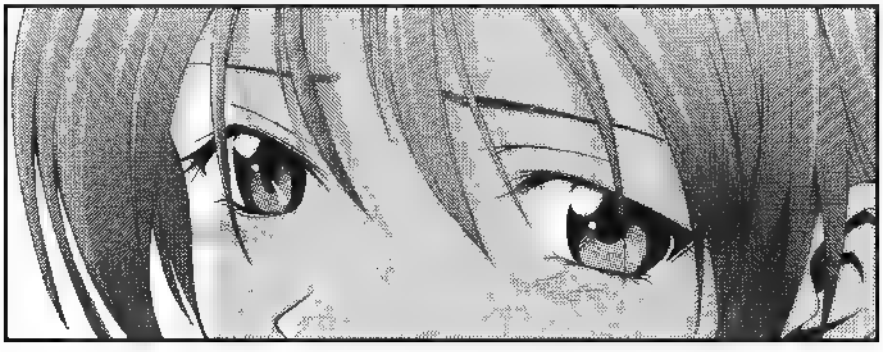
SAKURAI
MOM, I'M GONNA GO TO THE STORE.

I DON'T SEE WHY WE EVEN BOTHER LOCKING IT. THERE'S NOTHING THERE WORTH STEALING...
ガラッ
SLIDE

AH, HONOKA. SINCE YOU'RE GOING OUT, WILL YOU LOCK THE SHRINE GATE?
OKAY.

ガラン
CLOP CLOP

ASAHINA-SAN...?

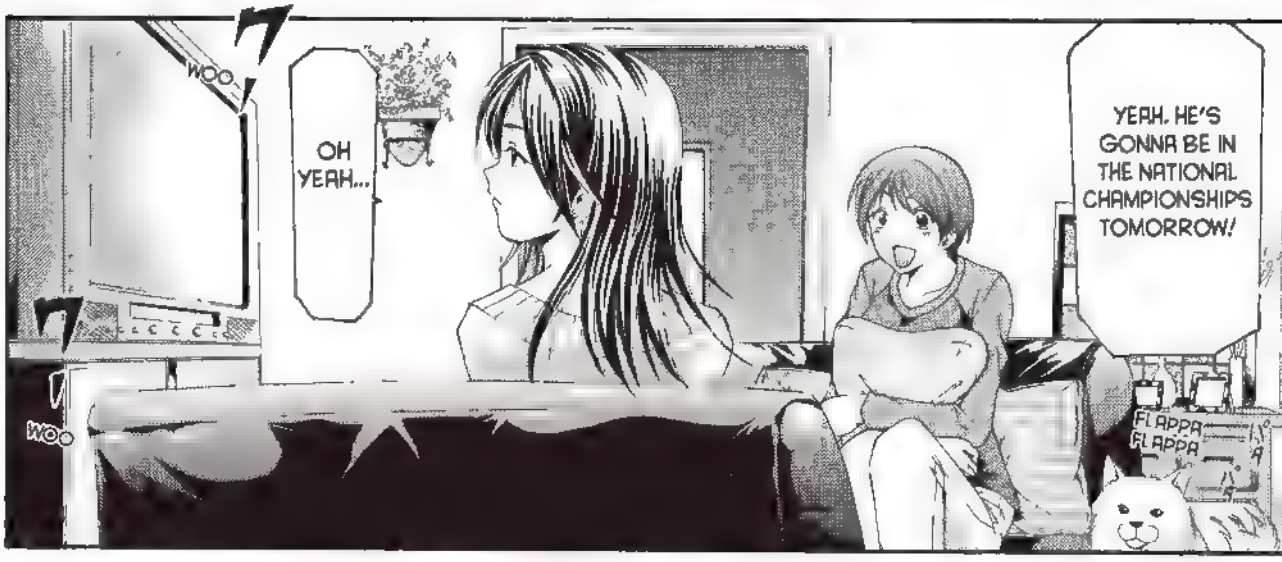


SUZUKA

#68 Loss

TWO YEARS AGO

TSUDA?
ASAHINA

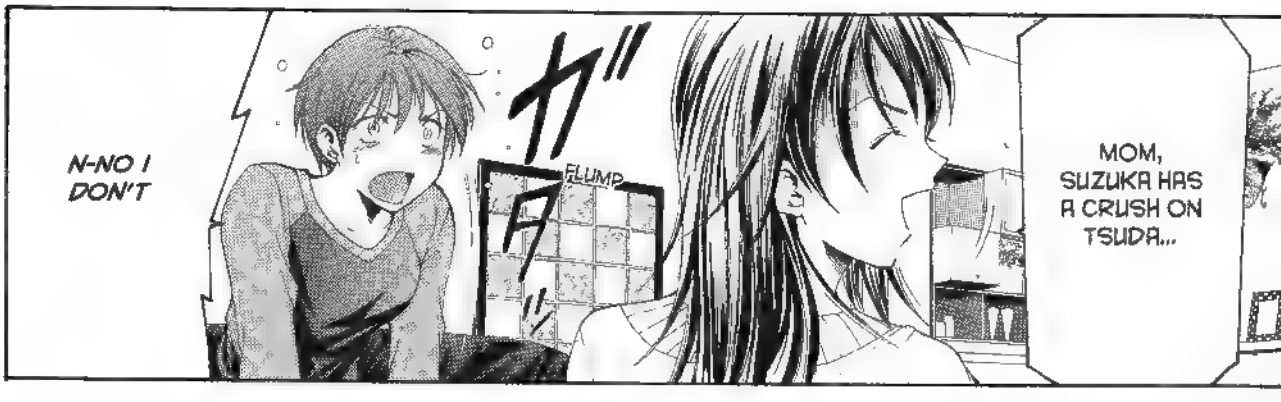

WOO
OH YEAH...
YEAH. HE'S GONNA BE IN THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS TOMORROW!
WOO
FLAPPA FLAPPA

WELL...
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S AWESOME?

.....
AND...?

BECAUSE HIS TIME IS REALLY GOOD RIGHT NOW, AND...HE SAID HE WAS GONNA TAKE FIRST PLACE...
W-WELL...
WHY DO YOU EVEN CARE?
IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S HIS FIRST TIME.
...LIKE HIM OR SOMETHING?
DO YOU...
OF COURSE... HOW COULD YOU? HE'S LIKE A LITTLE KID.
HE'S NOT EVEN THAT CUTE!
カァァ
BLUSH
...WHAT!?
N-NO WAY!

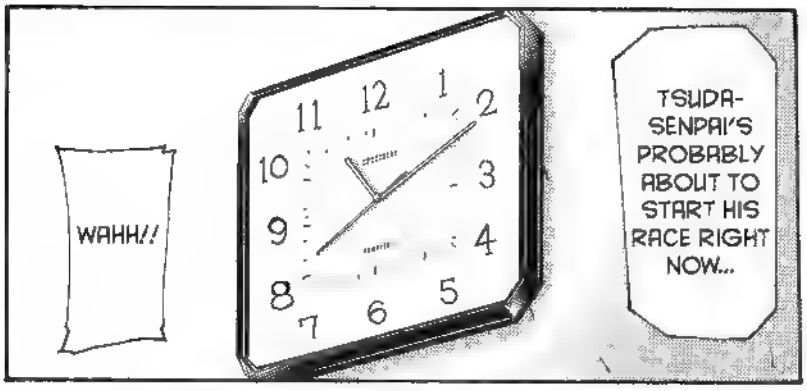
B-BUT...
HE LOOKS PRETTY GOOD WHEN HE'S RUNNING!!
A-HA!
W-WHAT...?
SO, YOU DO LIKE HIM. I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOU.
WHAT...?


N-NO I DON'T
FLUMP
MOM, SUZUKA HAS A CRUSH ON TSUDA...

I'M NOT EATING!!
CLOPPA
CLOPPA
HEY, WHERE'RE YOU GOING, SUZUKA?
IT'S ALMOST DINNER-TIME.
HEY...
SHUT UP!!
I HATE YOU!!
FLUMP

Suzuka's room
Please Knock.
SLAM
GEEZ!
MY STUPID SISTER!!
I'VE ALWAYS...
...LOVED YOU.
BLUSH
I WONDER WHAT MY FAMILY WOULD THINK...
IF I INTRO-DUCED HIM AS MY BOY-FRIEND.
1

WHEN I TAKE FIRST PLACE IN THE NATIONALS...


WAHH!!
TSUDA-SENPAI'S PROBABLY ABOUT TO START HIS RACE RIGHT NOW...

SHUFFLE
SHUFFLE

I-I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY TO HIM BUT...
I GUESS I COULD JUST CALL HIM, AND JOKE ABOUT HOW NERVOUS HE SOUNDS.

NAH, FORGET IT.

.....

DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT!
WHO THE HELL IS IT!
!?
SHOCK
RING RING
WHO IS THIS!?
CLICK
HELLO, ASAHINA SPEAKING!
OH...HEY...
IS EVERYTHING OKAY? YOU NEVER CALL MY HOUSE...
AH, IS TSUDA-SENPAI DOING WELL?
UH...MY NAME IS MIYA-MOTO. MAY I SPEAK WITH ASA-HINA-SAN PLEASE...?
...MIYA-MOTO-SENPAI?
.....
MIYAMOTO-SENPAI? AH, IT'S ME...

THERE WAS A CAR ACCIDENT...
...KAZUKI... WAS KILLED.
WHAT...?

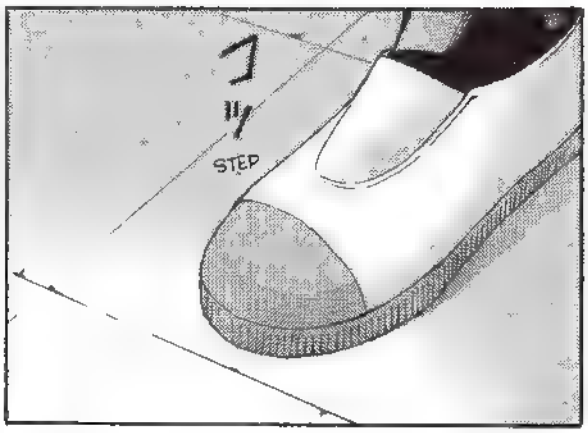
A TRUCK DRIVER FELL ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL AND RAN A RED LIGHT...
TSSS
HE FORGOT HIS SPIKES. HE WAS ON HIS WAY HOME TO GET THEM...
THAT IDIOT... WHY'D HE HAVE TO GO AND DIE ON US...
WHY COULDN'T HE HAVE JUST STAYED ON THE TRACK...

TSUDA-SENPAI...
WERE YOU ONE OF HIS TEAM-MATE'S...?
UH...
AH... YES.
...OH... THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING.
OF COURSE...

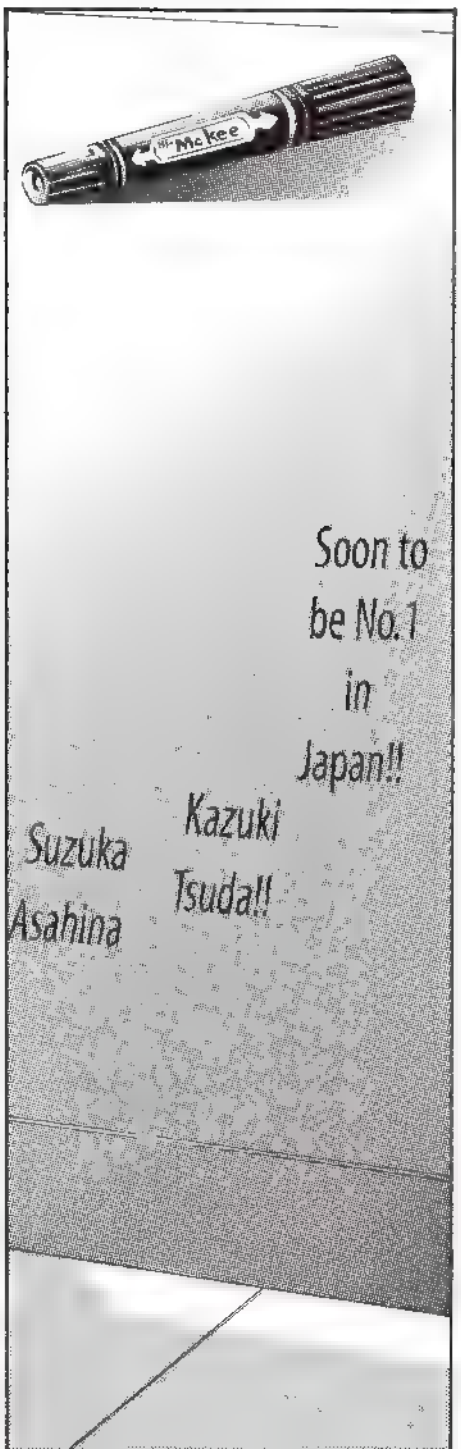
EVEN AS I STOOD OVER TSUDA-SENPAI'S BODY...
I FELT NEITHER SORROW NOR PAIN...
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT...
AND I SHOULD HAVE BEEN CRYING, TOO...
EVERYONE ELSE AROUND ME WAS CRYING SO HARD...
BUT I JUST STOOD THERE...
...WITHOUT SHEDDING EVEN A SINGLE TEAR.
I MUST BE...
...A COLD-HEARTED PERSON.

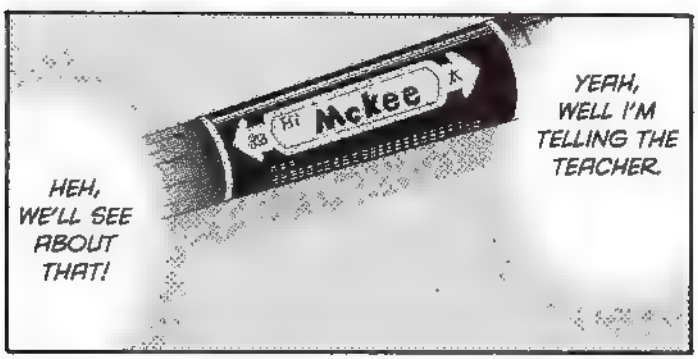
.....
HEY, SUZUKA, EVER HEAR OF KNOCKING?

コツ
STEP

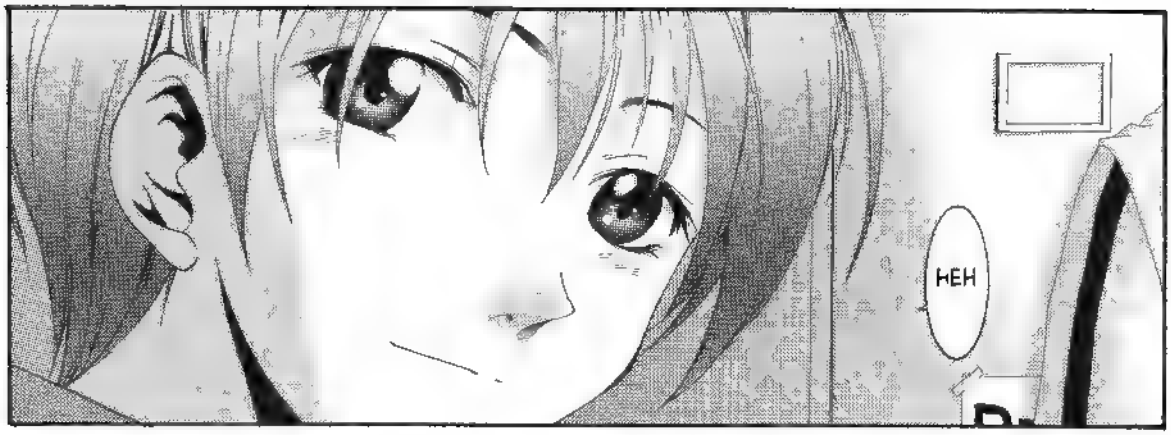

コツ
STEP

AH!! QUIT VANDALIZING THE DESKS!!
TCH... I'M NOT VANDALIZING IT, STUPID... I'M JUST STATING MY GOAL.


Mckee
Soon to be No.1 in Japan!!
Suzuka Asahina
Kazuki Tsuda!!

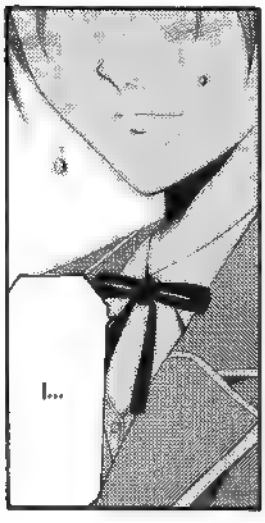

Mckee
YEAH, WELL I'M TELLING THE TEACHER.
HEH, WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!

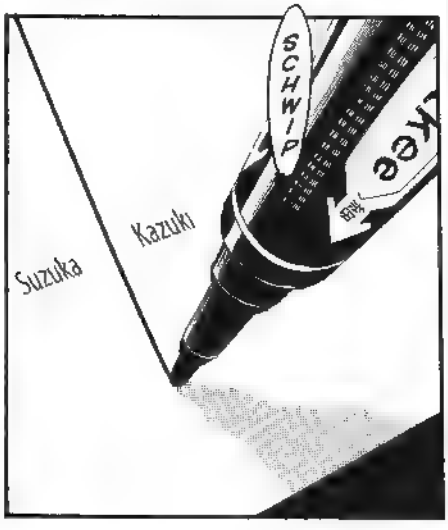
H-HEY, THAT'S A PERMANENT MARKER!
I'LL WRITE YOUR NAME, TOO!! NOW YOU'RE AN ACCOMPLICE!!


HEH

Soon to be No.1 in Japan!!
Kazuki Tsuda!!
Suzuka

TSUDA-SEN-PAI...


I...

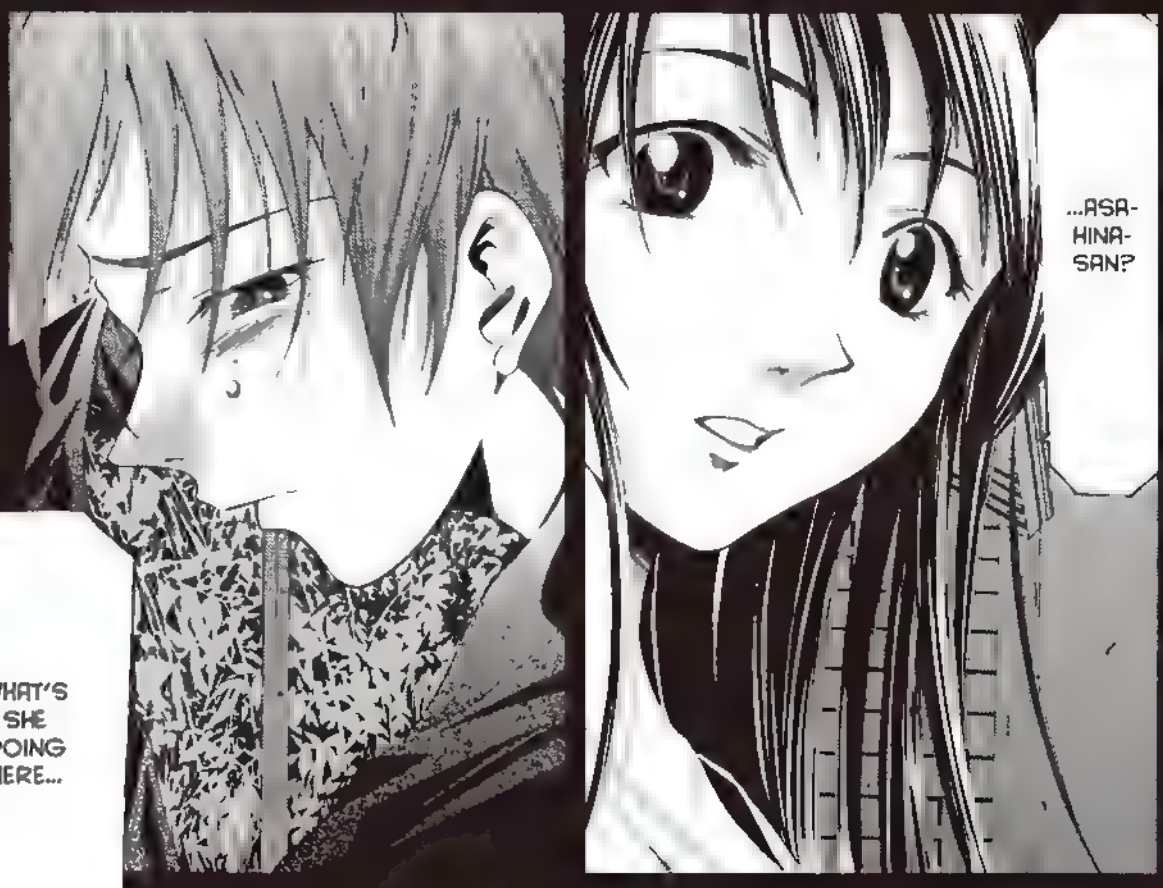

SCHWIP
Suzuka
Kazuki

I WAS ALL READY...
DRIP
DRIP
...TO TELL YOU HOW I FELT....
Soon to be No.1 in Japan!!
Kazuki Tsuda!!
Suzuka Asahina

...HAD TO GO AND DIE ON ME...
BUT YOU...
Mckee
PLUP
NOW...
PLUP
...I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO TELL YOU!!

YOU NEVER SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME YOU LOVED ME.
IT'S NOT FAIR!
YOU BUILD UP MY EXPECTATIONS, AND THEN...

HUH?
カラン
CLOP


...ASA-
HINA-
SAN?
WHAT'S
SHE
DOING
HERE...

SUZUKA

#69 True Feelings

N-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ASAHINA?
...
...YEAH...
YOU LIVE HERE DON'T YOU KONOKA CHAN...
Y-YEAH...
SORT OF
I GUESS I'M IN YOUR WAY...
...
IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG...?
N-NO, IT'S OKAY.
UM...

Y-YOU LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE CRYING...
I JUST HAD SOME-THING IN MY EYE, THAT'S ALL.
OH... YOU DID?
...YEAH..

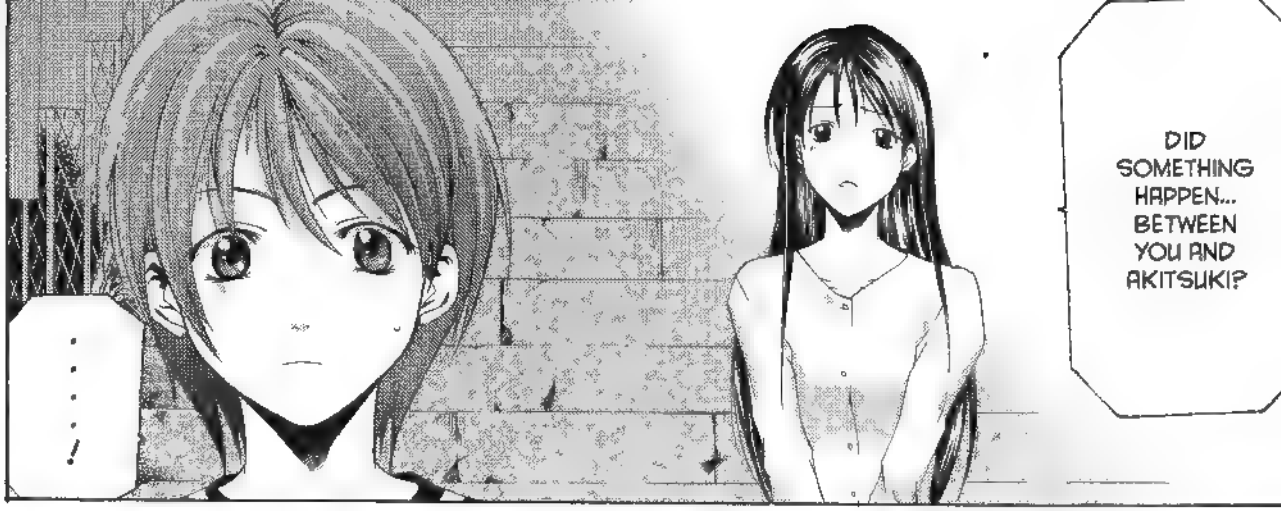
OH NO... I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO SAY TO HER.
UH...UM...

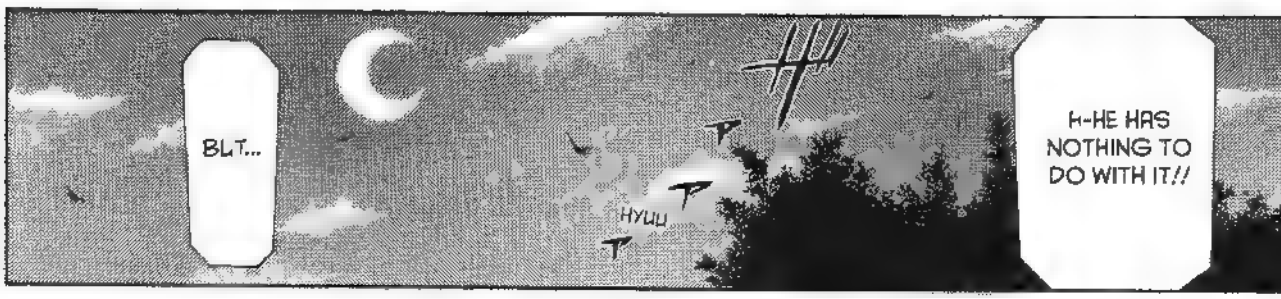
YOU'RE THE ONLY FRESHMEN GIRL WHO MADE IT TO THE CHAM-PIONSHIPS, RIGHT? THAT'S SO AMAZING.

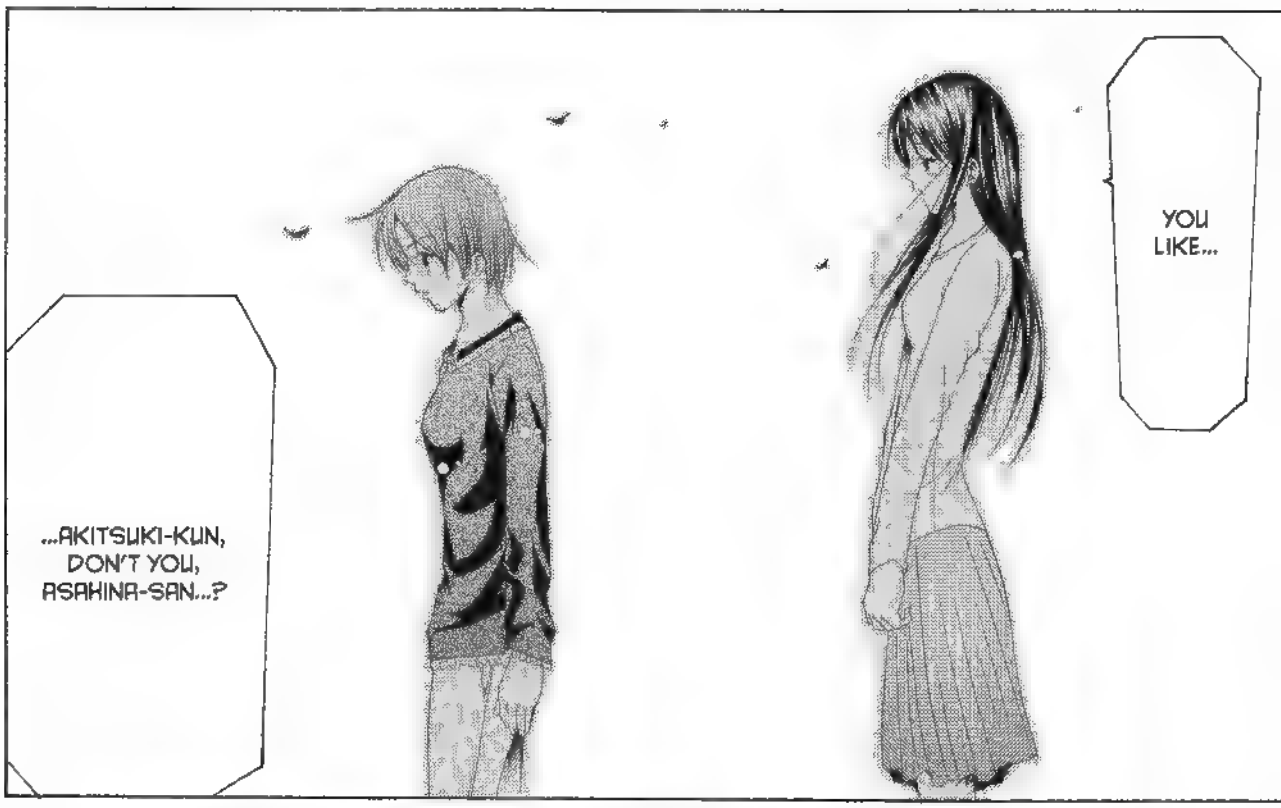
AH...THE KANTO DISTRICT CHAMPION-SHIPS ARE COMING UP SOON!
...YEAH.

...I GUESS.

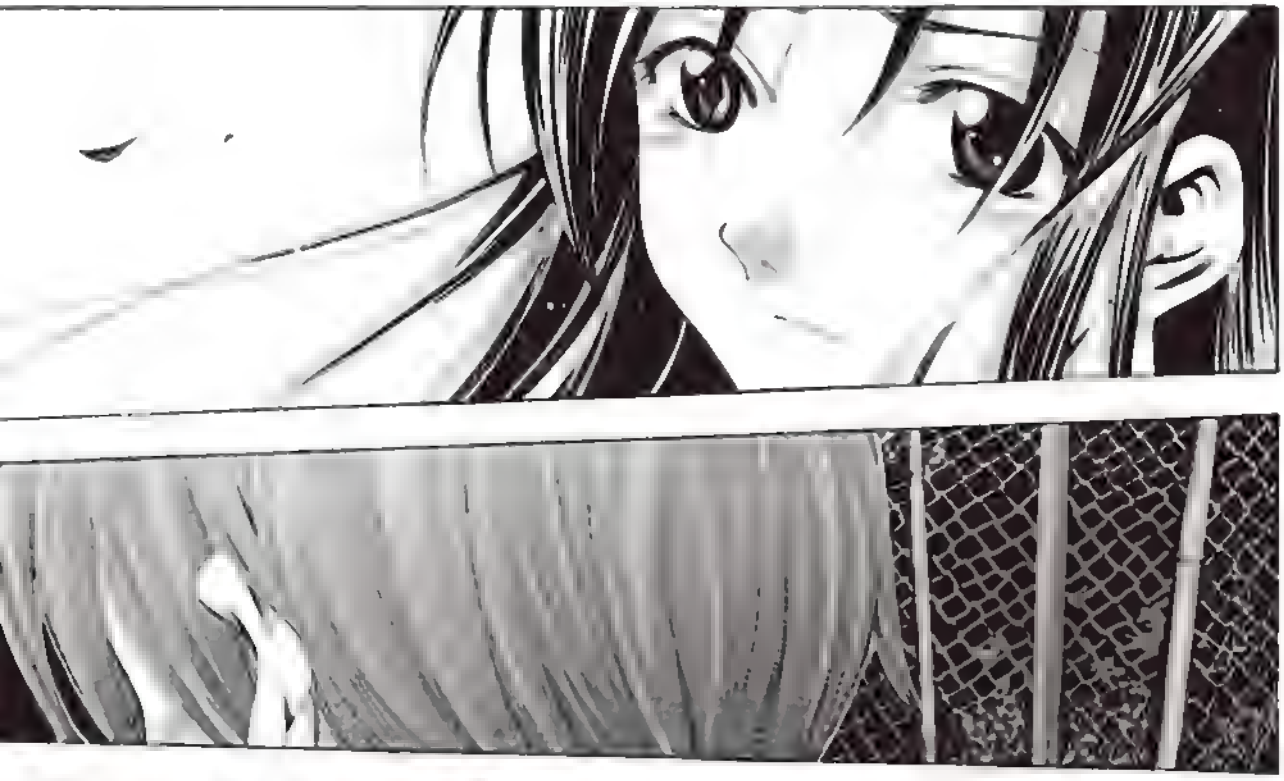
I-I WONDER IF HE'S OKAY. HE LOOKED REALLY UPSET...
I WAS HOPING THAT AKITSUKI-KUN WOULD MAKE IT, TOO, BUT HE DIDN'T GET THROUGH THE PRELIMINARIES...
.....
AH... HEY...
...EXCUSE ME. I'D BETTER GET HOME...

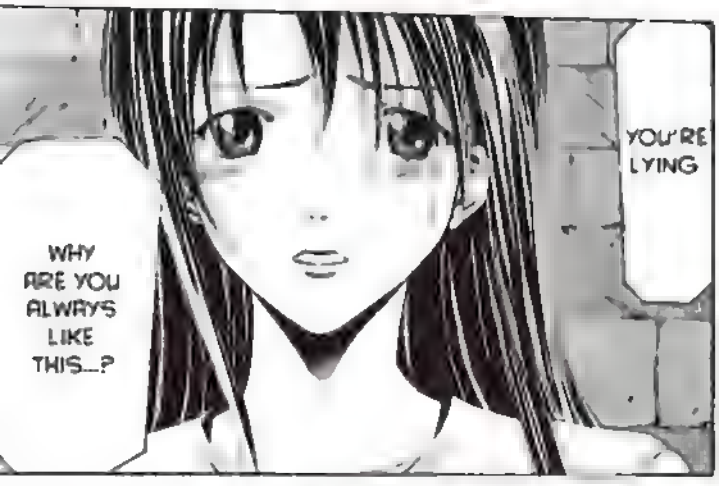

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN... BETWEEN YOU AND AKITSUKI?
.....!


H-HE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!!
HYUU
BUT...


YOU LIKE...
...AKITSUKI-KUN, DON'T YOU, ASAHINA-SAN...?

...WHAT?




YOU'RE LYING
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS LIKE THIS...?

I TOLD YOU BEFORE, I DON'T REALLY SEE HIM LIKE THAT...
YAMATO-KUN IS JUST A FRIEND..

I JUST SAID..
WHENEVER I TRY TO HAVE A SERIOUS CONVERSATION WITH YOU, YOU ALWAYS LIE AND TRY TO HIDE HOW YOU REALLY FEEL...

.....!?
WHAT!?

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT DOES IT MATTER TO YOU?
IT MATTERS!

I'M SICK OF YOUR BULLSHIT!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW HARD YOU MAKE IT FOR EVERYONE AROUND YOU?

WHY CAN'T YOU JUST TELL AKITSUKI WHETHER YOU LIKE HIM OR NOT?
.....
IT MATTERS TO ME...
...AND TO AKITSUKI, TOO!
YOU MAKE LIFE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ALL OF US!
IT'S YOUR WISHY-WASHY ATTITUDE THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
WHAT THE HELL IS THE MATTER WITH YOU?
YOU CAN GO OUT WITH HIM ANY TIME YOU WANT, YOU KNOW THAT...
A...
ALL I DID WAS—

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW I FEEL!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE THE ONLY PERSON YOU LOVE DIE ON YOU.
.....!!

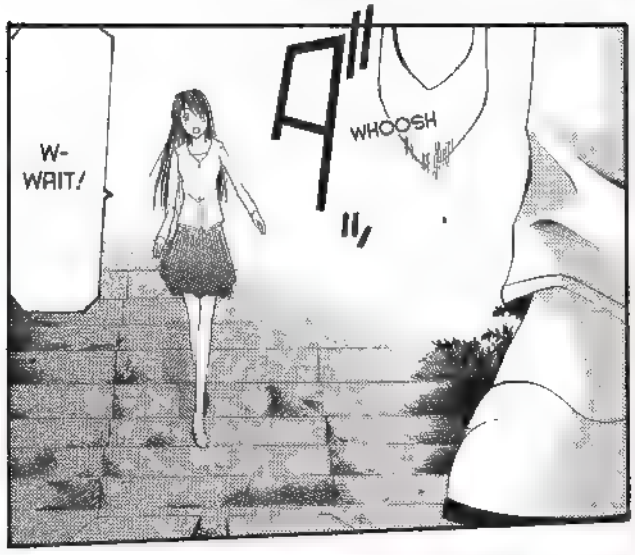
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE THE GUY YOU LOVE STOLEN AWAY FROM YOU BY SOMEONE ELSE.
WELL, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW I FEEL EITHER!!

HYUU
AAA

.....!

AKITSUKI HAS BEEN...
...WAITING FOR YOU A LONG, LONG TIME...

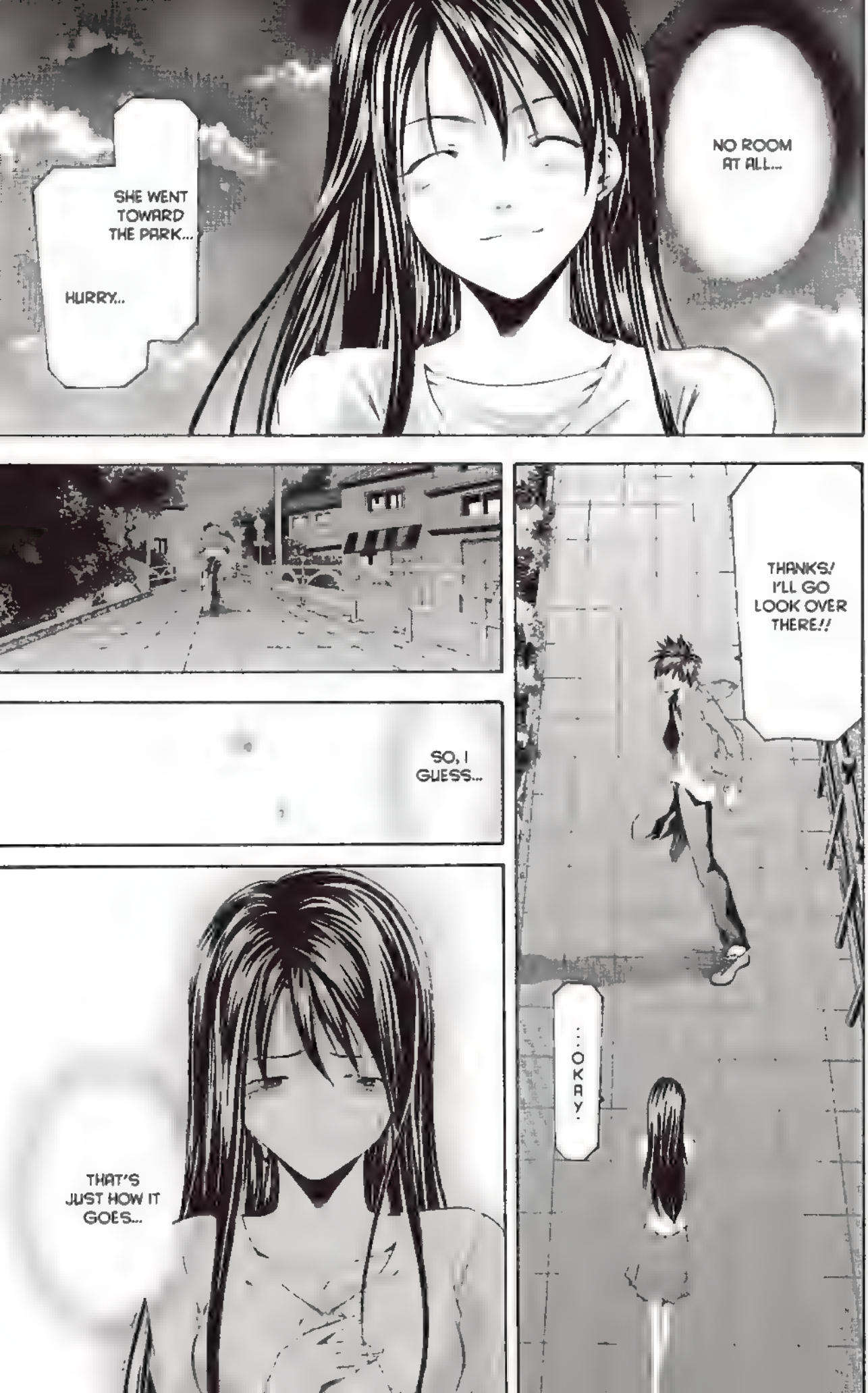
WOULD YOU JUST BE WITH HIM AL-READY...
WHAT...?

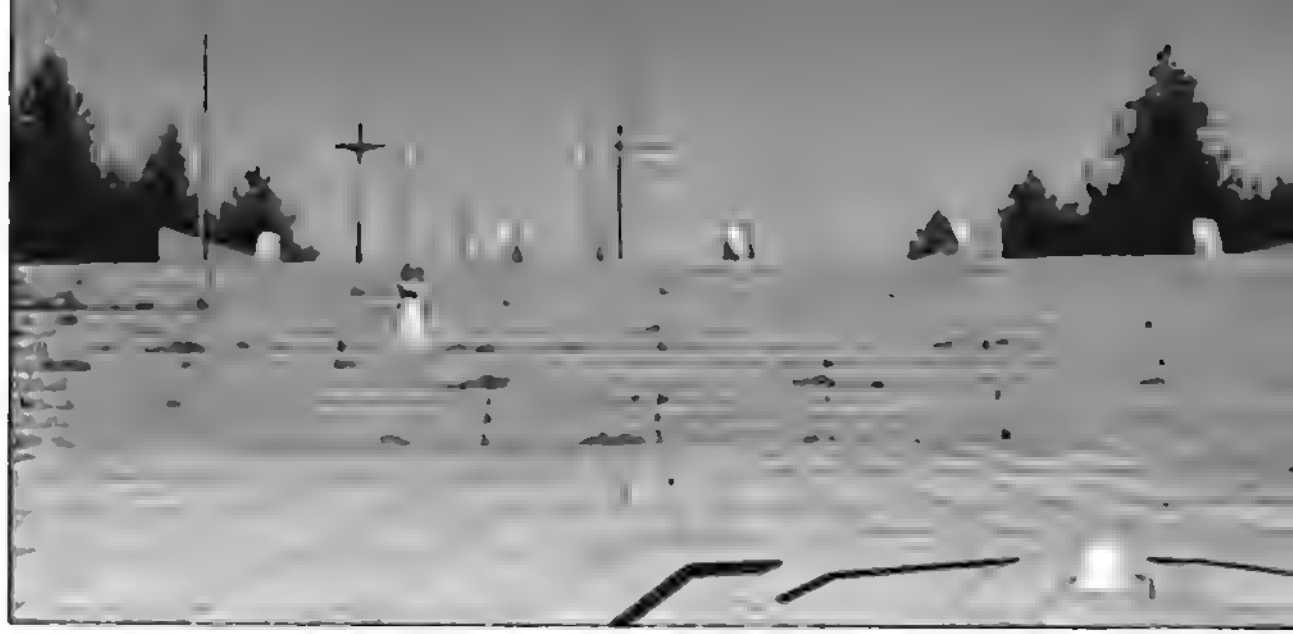

W-WAIT!
WHOOSH

.....

WAIT A SEC-OND!!
HEY, ASAHINA-SAN!!

ASAHINA DISAPPEARED, AND...
I CAN'T FIND HER ANYWHERE.
OH...SHE WAS JUST HERE A SECOND AGO...
WHAT... REALLY!?
AH...UM...ARE YOU FEELING BETTER, AKITSUKI?
YOU LOOKED PRETTY DEPRESSED.
W-WHERE IS SHE!?
WHERE DID SHE GO!?
I...
I CAN'T GET BETWEEN THESE TWO RIGHT NOW. THERE'S JUST NO ROOM FOR ME...

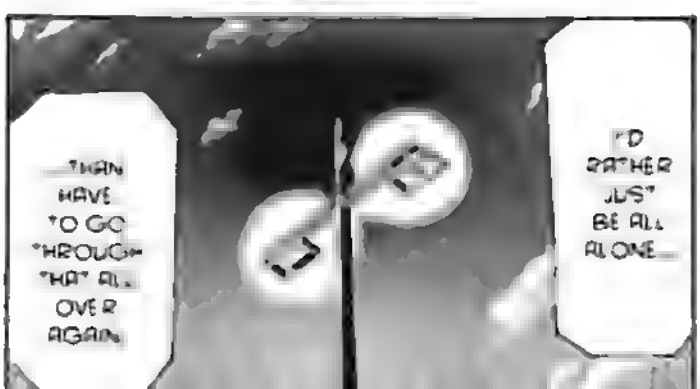

NO ROOM AT ALL...
SHE WENT TOWARD THE PARK...
HURRY...
THANKS! I'LL GO LOOK OVER THERE!!
...OKAY.
SO, I GUESS...
THAT'S JUST HOW IT GOES...



WOULD YOU JUST BE WITH HIM ALREADY

.....
I CAN'T

AH, SUKI WAS BEEN
WRITING FOR YOU A LONG LONG TIME


I'D RATHER JUST BE ALL ALONE
THAN HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT ALL OVER AGAIN

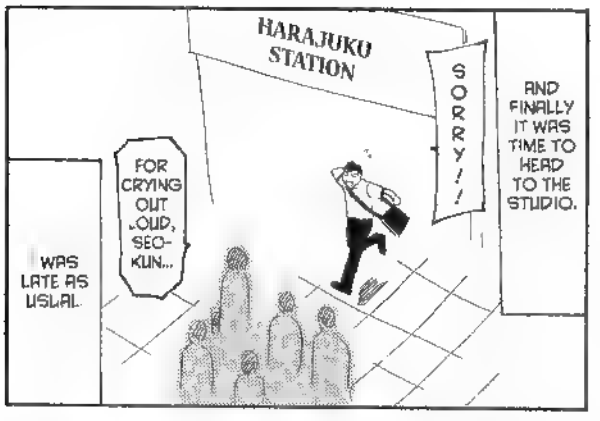
ALL
ALONE...
...I'M
SORRY
I'LL
APOLOGIZE
OVER
AND OVER.
PROMISE
AND THEN WE
CAN JUST
BE FRIENDS
AGAIN.
I'M
STILL...
...IN LOVE
WITH YOU
ASAHINA

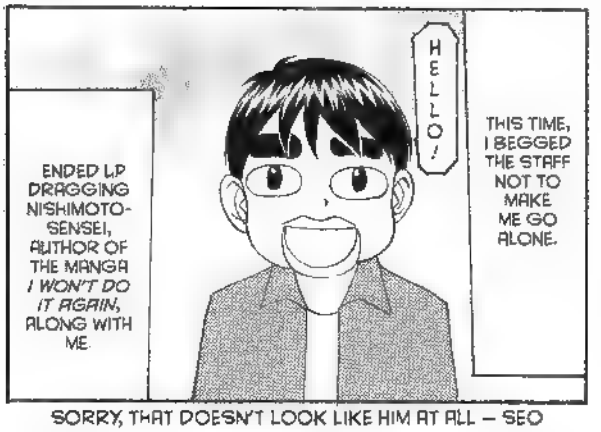
CONTINUED IN VOLUME 9

SPECIAL BONUS MANGA

"PLEASE DON'T DRAG ME OUT IN PUBLIC— PART 2"

IT'S SO CUTE?
IT IS SO CUTE.
IT'S SO CU-TE.
IT'S SOOO CUTE.
SUZUKA
F.NALLY, THE B,G DAY HAS ARRIVED...
I COULDN'T SLEEP AT ALL THE NIGHT BEFORE THE TAPING OF THE *SUZUKA* ANIME. STAYED UP TI.L DAWN, PRACTIC NG WHAT I ASSUMED WOULD BE MY LINE.




HELLO!
ENDED UP DRAGGING NISHIMOTO-SENSEI, AUTHOR OF THE MANGA *I WON'T DO IT AGAIN*, ALONG WITH ME.
THIS TIME, I BEGGED THE STAFF NOT TO MAKE ME GO ALONE.

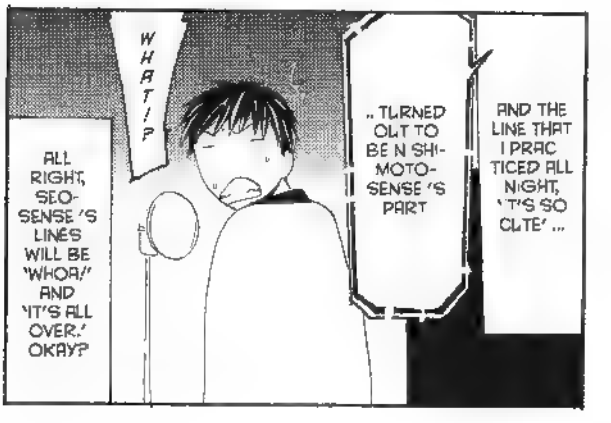
SORRY, THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HIM AT ALL — SEO

UHHH...I DON'T TH NK SO...
WHEN YOU WRITE ABOUT THIS IN *I WON'T DO IT AGAIN*, MAKE ME LOOK COOL, OKAY?
It's WOBBLE
PANT
PANT
I WAS HALF DEAD FROM LACK OF SLEEP AND OVER-ACT VE NERVES.

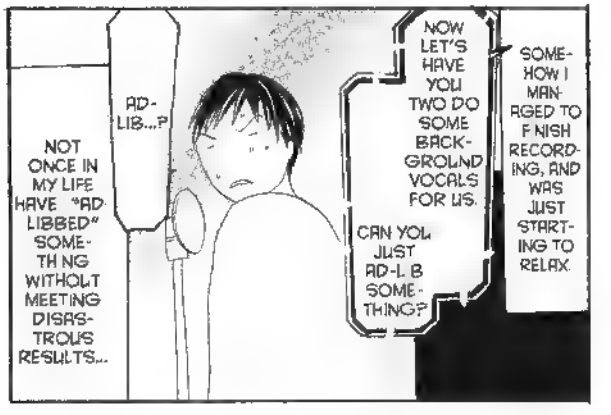
THE WRITING ROOM
YEAH~
FEEL MUCH BETTER NOW THAT I KNOW IT'S JUST GONNA BE THE TWO OF US.
SUZUKA
I WAS RELIEVED TO LEARN THAT I'D BE RECORDING PRIVATELY AFTER ALL THE OTHER VOICE ACTORS WERE FINISHED. IT WOULD JUST BE ME AND NISHIMOTO-SENSEI, BUT...

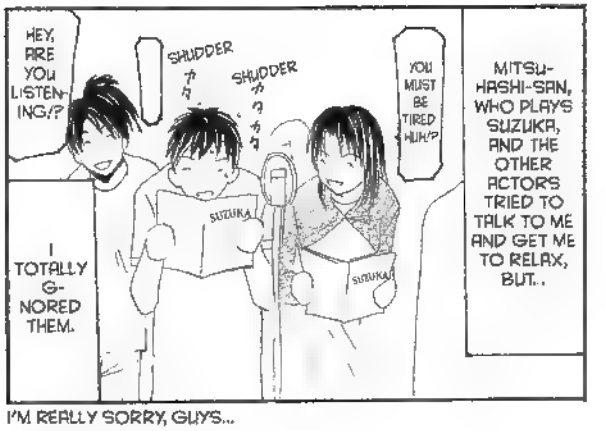
WHAT!?
LET'S GO!!
ALL RIGHT, IT'S TIME FOR YOU TWO TO COME JOIN EVERY-BODY.
MITSUYA-SAN SET ME UP.
FWING

CHATTER
HOW DID I GET MY SE..F INTO THIS...?
CHATTER
THERE I STOOD, IN FRONT OF THE MICRO-PHONE AND SUR-ROUNDED BY AL. THOSE PROFES-SIONAL VOICE AC-TORS...
..WISHING 'D NEVER WRITTEN LINES FOR THE CHARAC-TER I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE PLAYING.

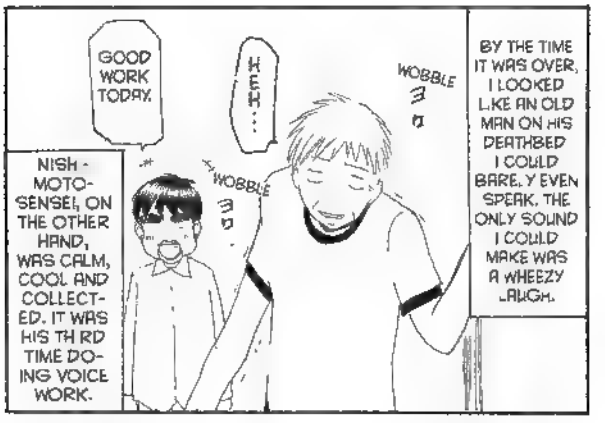

WHAT!?
.. TURNED OUT TO BE NISHI-MOTO-SENSE'S PART
AND THE LINE THAT I PRAC TICED ALL NIGHT, 'IT'S SO CUTE' ...
ALL RIGHT, SEO-SENSE'S LINES WILL BE 'WHOA!' AND 'IT'S ALL OVER.' OKAY?

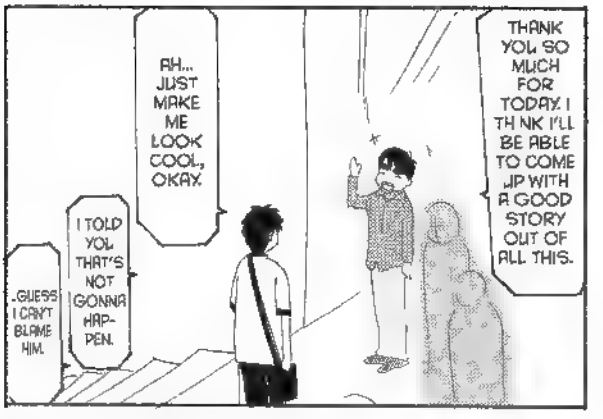
WOULD YOU GUYS JUST LEAVE, PLEASE?
SMIRK
SMIRK
FOR SOME REASON, TWO OF OUR CREW MEMBERS KEPT STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME, WATCHING WITH HUGE GRINS ON THEIR FACES.


NOT ONCE IN MY LIFE HAVE "AD LIBBED" SOMETHING WITHOUT MEETING DISASTROUS RESULTS...
AD-LIB...?
NOW LET'S HAVE YOU TWO DO SOME BACKGROUND VOCALS FOR US.
CAN YOU JUST AD-LIB SOMETHING?
SOMEHOW I MANAGED TO FINISH RECORDING, AND WAS JUST STARTING TO RELAX.


HEY, ARE YOU LISTENING!?
I TOTALLY IGNORED THEM.
SHUDDER
SHUDDER
SUZUKA
SUZUKA
YOU MUST BE TIRED HUH?
MITSUHASHI-SAN, WHO PLAYS SUZUKA, AND THE OTHER ACTORS TRIED TO TALK TO ME AND GET ME TO RELAX, BUT...

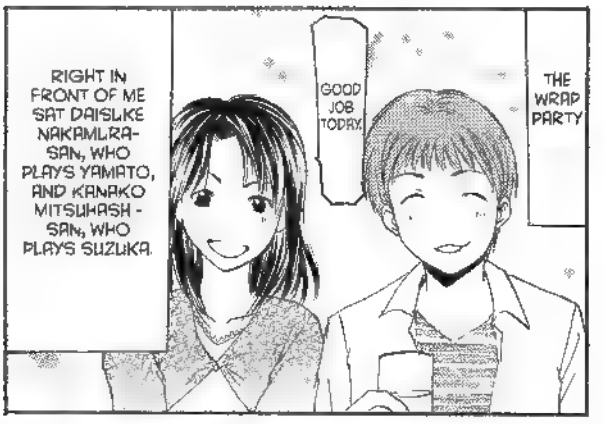
I'M REALLY SORRY, GUYS...

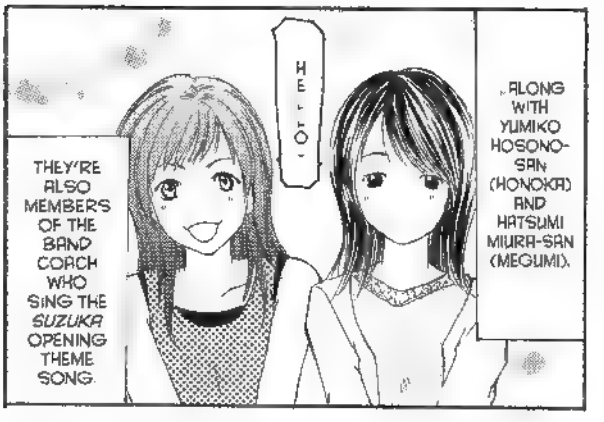

NISHIMOTO-SENSEI, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS CALM, COOL AND COLLECTED. IT WAS HIS THIRD TIME DOING VOICE WORK.
GOOD WORK TODAY.
HEH...
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
BY THE TIME IT WAS OVER, I LOOKED LIKE AN OLD MAN ON HIS DEATHBED I COULD BARELY EVEN SPEAK. THE ONLY SOUND I COULD MAKE WAS A WHEEZY LAUGH.


...GUESS I CAN'T BLAME HIM.
I TOLD YOU, THAT'S NOT GONNA HAPPEN.
AH... JUST MAKE ME LOOK COOL, OKAY.
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TODAY. I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH A GOOD STORY OUT OF ALL THIS.

WHAT?
SHOCK
THEY TURNED DOWN ALL MY IDEAS.
THIS IS SO BORING.
ON THE WAY BACK, WE HAD A MEETING AT A FAMILY RESTAURANT.

SEO-KUN, JUST SO YOU KNOW, WE'RE HAVING A WRAP PARTY AFTER THIS.
SHUDDER
ANOTHER BEER, PLEASE. THE BIGGEST SIZE YOU'VE GOT!
I COULDN'T HANDLE IT ANYMORE, SO I TURNED TO BOOZE.


RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME SAT DAISUKE NAKAMURA-SAN, WHO PLAYS YAMATO, AND KANAKO MITSUHASHI-SAN, WHO PLAYS SUZUKA.
GOOD JOB TODAY.
THE WRAP PARTY


HEY!
THEY'RE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE BAND COACH WHO SING THE SUZUKA OPENING THEME SONG.
...ALONG WITH YUMIKO HOSONO-SAN (HONOKA) AND HATSUMI MIURA-SAN (MEGUMI).

...I WAS STUCK DRINKING WITH THE OTHER GUYS.
YEP, THE HIROSHIMA CARP CAN'T BE BEAT!
SUZUKA DIRECTOR, HIROSHI FUKUTOMI-SAN
THE HIROSHIMA CARP ARE THE BEST TEAM IN BASEBALL, AM I RIGHT, FUKUTOMI-SAN!?
THE NEXT THING I KNEW...

THE END

COMING SOON IN THE BONUS MANGA SECTION IT'S... *"YOU SCARED OF HEIGHTS? HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW?"*

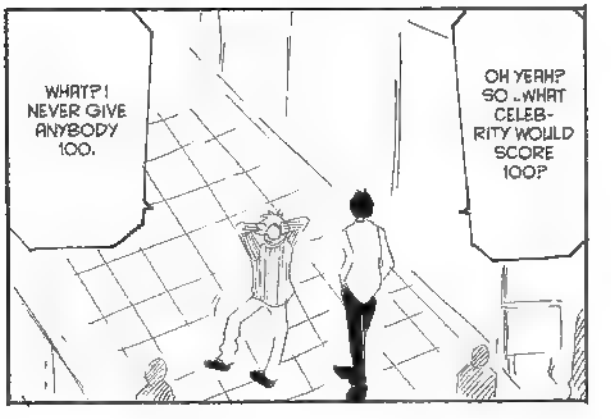
WHEREIN KOUJI SEO TAKES ON PARAGLIDING IN AN ATTEMPT TO GET BACK AT HIS COWORKERS!!

SUPER SPECIAL BONUS MANGA

"WELCOME HOME! YASUNOBU-KUN"

YOU NEED TO CHILL OUT..
YOINK
YOINK
キョロ
キョロ
THAT GIRL'S A 68,
WOW! SHE'S A 79!!
HADN'T SEEN HIM IN FOREVER, BUT HE WAS THE SAME OL' YASUNOBU-KUN...

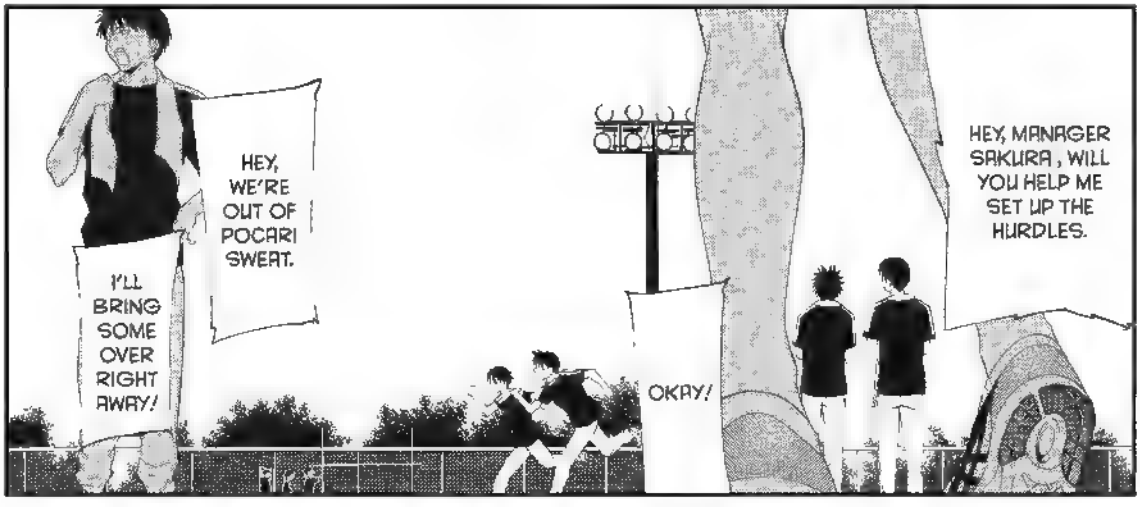
LET'S SEE... ABOUT 85 MAYBE...
YOU KEEP RATING ALL THESE GIRLS...SO WHAT ABOUT THE CUTEST GIRL YOU'VE EVER SEEN...HOW HIGH DID SHE SCORE?


WHAT?! NEVER GIVE ANYBODY 100.
OH YEAH? SO ..WHAT CELEBRITY WOULD SCORE 100?

HEH フフン
WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO LIVE FOR NOW..?
IF I FOUND PERFECTION, I'D HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO LIVE FOR THE GAME WOULD BE OVER.
LEAVE IT TO YASUNOBU KUN TO SAY SOMETHING TOTALLY IDIOTIC AND ACT AS IF IT'S THE COOLEST THING IN THE WORLD.

Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more an art than a science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction or where a Japanese cultural reference is used.

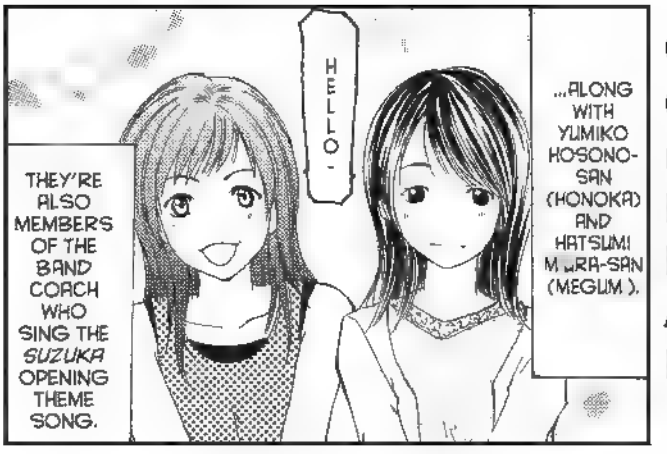


"Mmmmm Sweat," page 39

Pocari Sweat is a popular Japanese sports drink.

***Okonomiyaki*, page 73**

Okonomiyaki is often referred to as a Japanese pancake. It's a concoction made of batter and a mixture of meat, vegetables, egg, and sometimes noodles. At most *okonomiyaki* restaurants your table will have a built in grill, and you can cook your own *okonomiyaki* right at the table.


THEY'RE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE BAND COACH WHO SING THE *SUZUKA* OPENING THEME SONG.
HELLO.
...ALONG WITH YUMIKO HOSONO-SAN (HONOKA) AND HATSUMI MIURA-SAN (MEGUM.).

Coach, page 189

Coach is a band made up of Yumiko Hosono, Hatsumi Miura, Ai Hayashi, Satomi Akesaka, and Michie Kitaura.

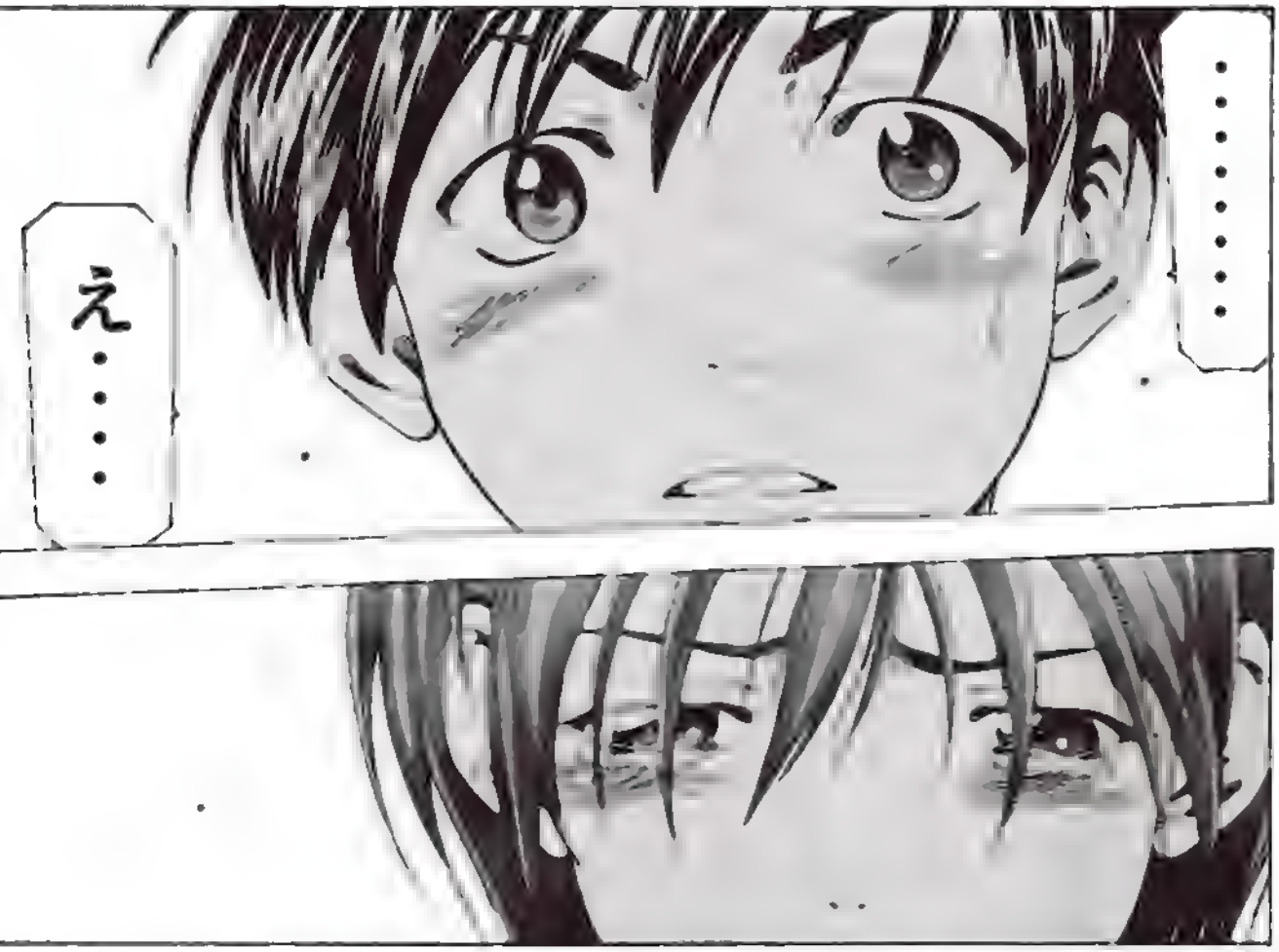
Preview of Volume 9

We're pleased to present you a preview from *Suzuka* volume 9. Please check our website (www.delreymanga.com) to see when this volume will be available in English. For now you'll have to make do with Japanese!

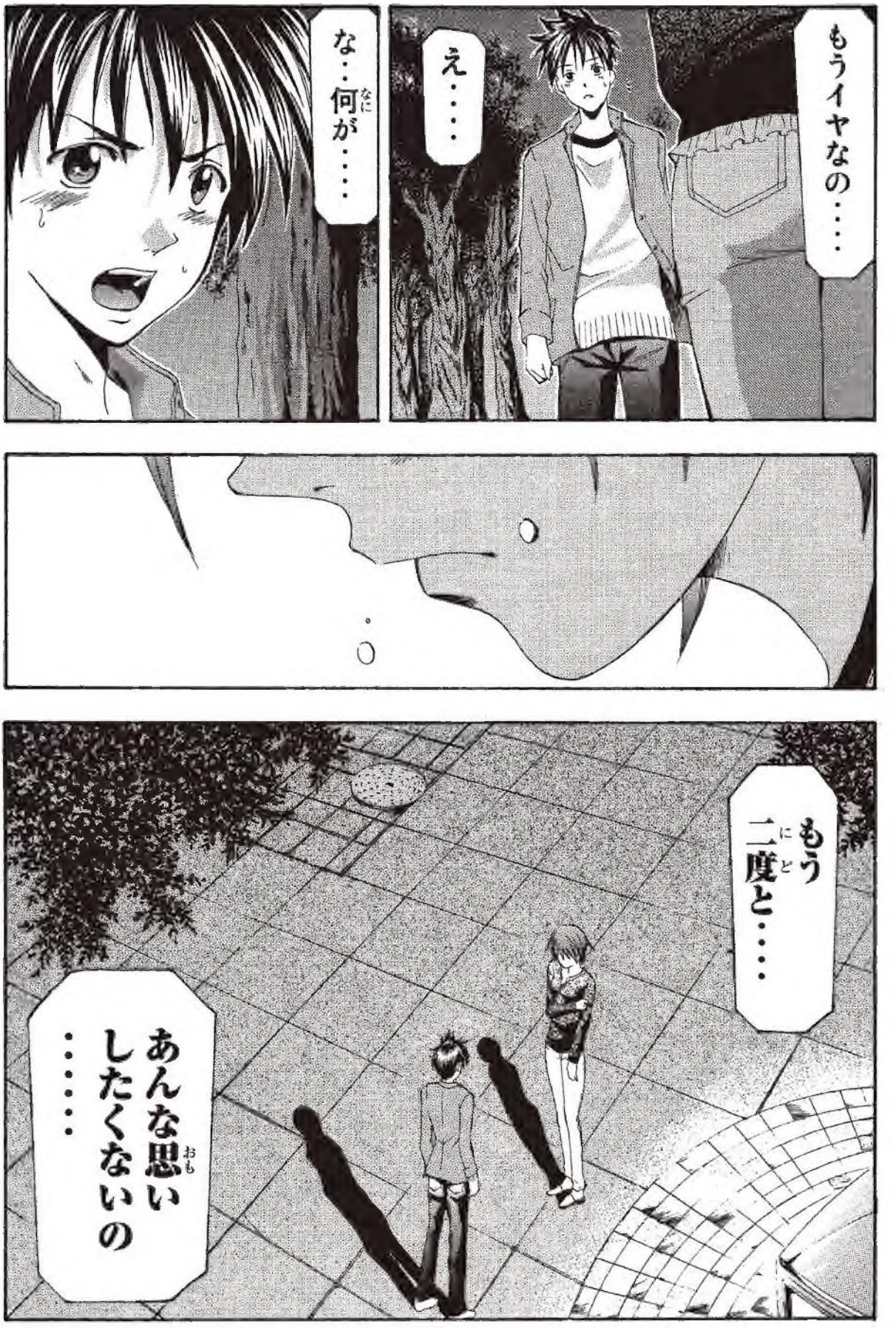
なんなのよ!!
え・・・
何が・・・・
どこで何してたって
私の勝手でしょ!?
関係ないじゃない
アンタなんかに!!

それなのにこんな所まで追っかけて来て……
バカなんじゃないの!?
大っキライ!!
いい加減にしてよ!!
頼んでないわよ探してくれなんて!!
すっごいメーワク!!
……悪イ……
でも心配だったから……
……!
ヒクッ
……
やめてよ……

これ以上
優しくされたら
私……
私 大和くんの
こと……


……
え……

あ…


もうイヤなの……
え……
な…何(なに)が……
もう二度(にど)と……
あんな思(おも)いしたくないの……

Gacha Gacha
THE NEXT REVOLUTION

HIROYUKI TAMAKOSHI

JUST ONE OF THE GIRLS

A whole new Gacha Gacha story line begins! Akira Hatsushiba is just your typical, average high school kid . . . until a glitch in a Gacha Gacha video game changes his life forever. Now, every time Akira sneezes, his entire body undergoes a gender-bending switcheroo! That's right, Akira is always just an *achoo* away from getting in touch with his feminine side. But it's not all bad. Akira has had a crush on Yurika Sakuraba ever since he first laid eyes on her. He's always been too shy, but now that he can change into a girl, Akira finally has a chance to get close to Yurika. Being a girl certainly has its advantages!

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REVENGE OF THE HORI CLAN

ORIGINAL STORY BY FŪTARO YAMADA
MANGA BY MASAKI SEGAWA

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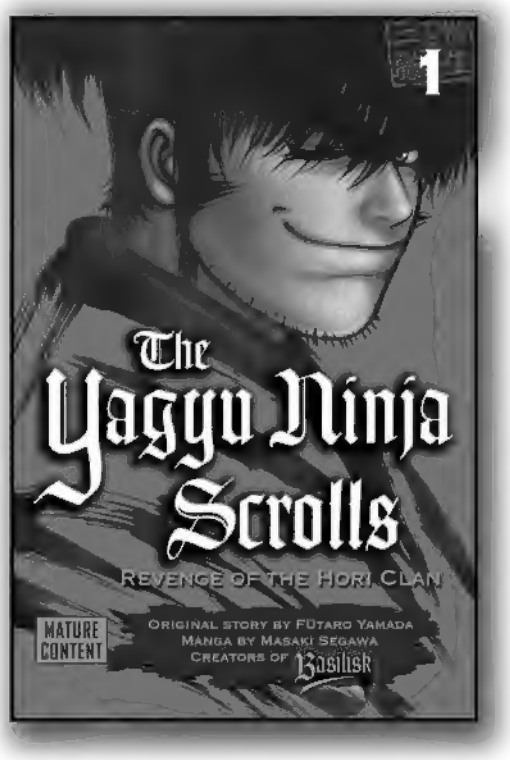
- **From the creators of *Basilisk***



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type of reading experience.

To start at the *beginning,* go to the *end*!

That's right! Authentic manga is read the traditional Japanese way—from right to left, exactly the *opposite* of how American books are read. It's easy to follow: Just go to the other end of the book, and read each page—and each panel—from right side to left side, starting at the top right. Now you're experiencing manga as it was meant to be.